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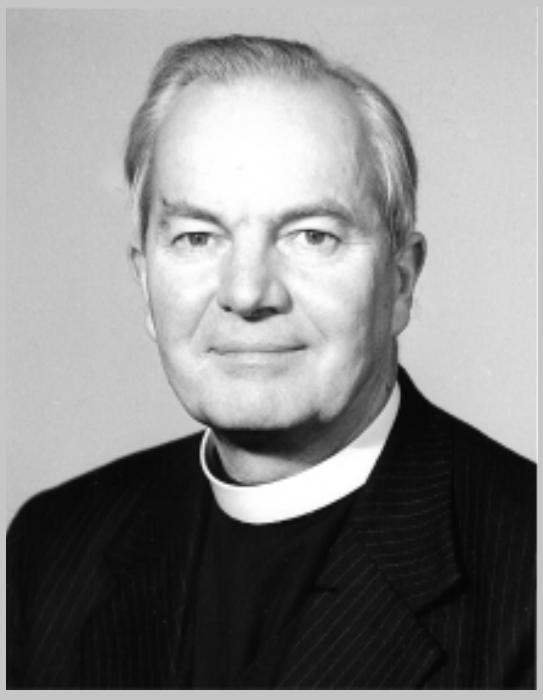

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FEATURE ARTICLE

ACTUALISM, DUALISM, AND ONTO-RELATIONS: Interrogating Torrance's Criticism of Barth's Doctrine of Baptism

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Abstract: *Thomas F. Torrance criticized Karl Barth's doctrine of baptism in Church Dogmatics 4.4, claiming that it exhibited an improper dualism. This essay explicates Torrance's criticism as one that arises from Torrance's own theological commitments and as a criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism. It does so by working through a series of four heuristic questions. First, what does Torrance mean when he accuses Barth of baptismal dualism? Second, why did Torrance think that Barth had lapsed into such a dualism? Third, what was Torrance's alternative to Barth's alleged baptismal dualism? Fourth, was Torrance right in his criticism of Barth? The essay concludes by reflecting on the question: where lies the disconnect between Barth and Torrance? Both thinkers are actualist, but they are so in different ways.*

Thomas F. Torrance was not only one of Karl Barth's most noted students, he was also—as Alister McGrath says—"a major figure in relation to English-language Barth-reception."[1] This close association of Torrance with Barth makes it all the more surprising when one encounters the admittedly few criticisms that Torrance made of Barth's theology. This essay is about one of those criticisms.

In his essay entitled "The One Baptism Common to Christ and His Church," Torrance gives voice to perhaps the most penetrating of these criticisms. He

1 Alister E. McGrath, *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 117. Two of the means through which the communication of Barth's theology to English-language theology occurred were the founding of the *Scottish Journal of Theology* and the translation of Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. See pp. 126–30; D. Densil Morgan, *Barth Reception in Britain* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 218–24; 257–60.

works through an impressive array of biblical and patristic material aimed at establishing in connection to baptism what he had already argued more generally in his dissertation, namely, that "grace is in fact identical with Jesus Christ in person and word and deed."[2] In his "One Baptism" essay Torrance puts this sentiment negatively vis-à-vis the "Augustinian Tradition," in which "grace is not only distinguished from Christ but is an intermediary reality between God and man which holds God himself apart from us."[3] Those who would reject such a disjunction are left, according to Torrance, with a stark binary choice: either "return to a sacramental dualism between water-baptism and Spirit baptism" or pursue "an even stronger unity between water-baptism and Spirit-baptism." Those familiar with the doctrine of baptism that Barth advanced in *Church Dogmatics* 4.4[4] can certainly see where this is going, but Torrance goes on to spell things out and thereby avoid any doubt about the referent for this criticism: "The former alternative has been taken by Karl Barth." Torrance includes another twist in this already interesting story. He wants to be clear that this criticism does not warrant a wholesale rejection of Barth's theology. Rather, what he finds in Barth's last blast of the trumpet, as it were, "seems to me to be deeply inconsistent" with Barth's understanding of the Trinity and incarnation.[5] Rather than an external criticism of Barth's theology, Torrance understands himself to be making an internal criticism, a criticism of Barth by Barth, or as engaging in an exercise to correct the circumference of Barth's theology by more rigorous connection to its center.

What makes this story even more stimulating is that Barth specialists have been at something of a loss when confronted by Torrance's criticisms, and they tend to handle it in one of three ways. The first approach is agreement. John Yocum, for example, accepts Torrance's point and attaches it to a narrative whereby Barth has increasing difficulty holding together divine and human agency in their proper relationship the further into *CD* 4 that he went, until

2 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers*, Theologos: The Torrance Collection (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 21. Molnar notes the significance of this insight both for Torrance's dissertation and his later work. Paul D. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity*, Great Theologians (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 10.

3 Thomas F. Torrance, "The One Baptism Common to Christ and His Church," in *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1996), 99.

4 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, 4 volumes in 13 part vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-75). *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, 4 vols. in 13 parts (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1932, and Zürich: TVZ, 1938–65), hereafter abbreviated as *CD* and *KD* respectively.

5 Torrance, "One Baptism," 99.

finally pulling them apart in *CD* 4.4.[6] I have committed a monograph to the argument that such a narrative of decline is unconvincing and will not rehash that subject here.[7] Second, one might take John Webster's approach and turn the criticism back onto Torrance, arguing that Torrance lacks a sufficiently deep appreciation for Barth's "ethical intention." According to Webster, Torrance's account of Jesus' humanity locates all meaningful human action therein and thus evacuates the Christian life of its ethical aspect. Webster represents Barth's account of Jesus' humanity, on the other hand, as upholding that ethical aspect by evoking in the Christian life meaningful human action that corresponds to God's own action in Christ.[8] But this strategy is, rhetorically speaking, something of a red herring and does not finally provide a sufficient answer to Torrance's criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism. The present essay, though not without a contrastive element, endeavors to hear and understand Torrance's criticism more fully. The third and final approach is that taken by Paul Molnar in his work on Karl Barth and the Lord's Supper, where he straightforwardly states, "I do not see a Gnostic dualism" in Barth's sacramental theology.[9] While defense of Barth against Torrance's criticism is not inappropriate, it also does not shed further light on the meaning of Torrance's criticism and its place in Torrance's thought. Writing with the purpose of expositing Torrance rather than Barth, Molnar returned briefly to this subject recently with a more satisfying discussion.[10]

The task remains to explicate Torrance's criticism of Barth as one that arises from *Torrance's own theological commitments* and as a criticism of *Barth's doctrine of baptism*. It is this two-pronged, stereoscopic reading that I undertake in this essay. To accomplish this task, I will interrogate Torrance's criticism by working through a series of four heuristic questions. First, what does Torrance mean when he accuses Barth of baptismal dualism? Second, why did Torrance think that Barth had lapsed into such a dualism? Third, what was Torrance's alternative to Barth's alleged baptismal dualism? Fourth, was Torrance right in his criticism of Barth? Having completed this interrogation, I will conclude by asking a final question: where lies the disconnect between Barth and Torrance?

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6 John Yocum, *Ecclesial Mediation in Karl Barth*, Barth Studies (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 174–75.

7 W. Travis McMaken, *The Sign of the Gospel: Toward an Evangelical Doctrine of Infant Baptism after Karl Barth*, Emerging Scholars (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013).

8 John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 171.

9 Paul D. Molnar, *Karl Barth and the Theology of the Lord's Supper: A Systematic Investigation*, Issues in Systematic Theology (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 303.

10 Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance*, 300–303.

1. What does Torrance mean by "dualism"?

McGrath notes that Torrance's work evinces "a growing concern over the issue of dualism" beginning in 1962.[11] This is unsurprising because it was during this period that Torrance was at work on one of his most important monographs, namely, *Theological Science*. As Torrance notes in his preface, this volume started its life as a lecture cycle delivered in 1959 at a number of theological institutions in the United States, before being published in "a considerably expanded" form in 1969.[12] The issue of dualism pervades this volume. For instance, Torrance applauds a "healthy rejection of dualism" on the first page.[13] Both Torrance's interest in theological science and his criticism of dualism predate this period, however, even if the idea and language of dualism only here begin to take center stage. Torrance studied with Barth in Basel from 1937–38. His initial plan for his dissertation was to attempt "a scientific account of Christian dogmatics," which Barth considered "too ambitious." He also wrote and delivered a lecture cycle on theology and science while teaching at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York during the 1938–39 academic year.[14] In other words, the emergence of Torrance's concern about dualism in the early 1960s is unsurprising insofar as it fits nicely with the trajectory and concerns of his thought from its earliest stages.

That his concern about dualism emerged at this point is interesting, because this is when Barth was hard at work on his mature doctrine of baptism. Barth delivered the lectures that would comprise *CD* 4.4 in 1959–60. Furthermore, Barth notes that "a very perspicacious abstract of these lectures" existed and "had a fairly wide circulation in several transcripts."[15] It was during this period that Torrance had a sustained private conversation with both Karl and Markus Barth on the topic of baptism when they visited Edinburgh in 1966.[16] Barth's

11 McGrath, *T. F. Torrance*, 142.

12 Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), vii.

13 Ibid., 1.

14 Thomas F. Torrance, "My Interaction with Karl Barth," in *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 123, 125. For a discussion of Torrance's theology and science lectures at Auburn, see McGrath, *T. F. Torrance*, 199–205. Toward the end of McGrath's discussion of these lectures he notes that conversation with Sir Bernard Lovell, a scientist and one of his wife's cousins, provided further impetus for Torrance's engagement in thinking about the intersection of theology and science. He suggests 1946 as the beginning of this influence (p. 205). See also Elmer M. Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian & Scientific Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 40–41.

15 *CD* 4.4, ix; *KD* 4.4, x.

16 Torrance, "My Interaction," 135.

publication of his revision of these lectures was motivated in part by the desire for his readers to have the full argument and articulation of his position before them rather than simply this précis. The German edition was published in 1967, and the English translation—which was overseen by Torrance as co-editor with Geoffrey Bromiley—appeared in 1969. This brings us to Torrance's criticism of Barth in his "One Baptism" essay, which was delivered as a lecture in 1970, published in German in 1971, and published in English in 1975.[17] As seen previously, this criticism was couched precisely in the language of dualism. Thus, it is interesting that Torrance's concern about dualism and Barth's doctrine of baptism grew up together, as it were. This is a pivotal moment in the development of Torrance's theology at which he clarified his own thought—through engagement with Barth—by developing the concept of "dualism" as an analytic tool.

This tool that Torrance developed proved to be multifaceted. Torrance identifies many different kinds of dualism, tracing their effects through a web of interconnected theological issues. Tapio Luoma helpfully brings together this panoply of dualisms by articulating a three-stage historical typology at work in Torrance's thought.[18] The first is Greek or Ptolemaic dualism with its tendency to distinguish so sharply between the sensible and the intelligible that it becomes difficult to conceive of true incarnation. Torrance analyzes patristic christological heresies in terms of their entanglements with this dualist intellectual framework, giving thinkers like Barth and Athanasius credit for not falling prey to these frameworks.[19] The second is Newtonian dualism, which promulgated an improper distinction between absolute space and time on one side, and relative space and time on the other. This led, as Torrance explains, to a mechanistic determinism. Third and finally, these dualisms are overcome by the dynamic engagement with objective reality found in contemporary "Einsteinian" modes of thought that,

17 Torrance, "One Baptism," 6.

18 Tapio Luoma, *Incarnation and Physics: Natural Science in the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance*, American Academy of Religion Academy Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20–21. Luoma provides some helpful criticisms of Torrance's historical typology that deserve to be taken seriously. Such criticism falls outside the scope of this essay, however. For another helpful explication of Torrance on dualism, and on the unitive modes of thought that he advances as the solution to dualism, see Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance*, Issues in Systematic Theology (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), esp. 11–20. It is further necessary to signal that concerns about epistemological and ontological dualisms are intertwined in Torrance's thought.

19 For example, see Torrance, "Legacy of Karl Barth," throughout, and esp. 167. See also the discussion in Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance*, 39–40, 107; Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, 70–71.

consequently, make it much easier to conceive of true incarnation.[20]

The variegated way that Torrance deploys the concept of dualism, briefly illustrated by Luoma's historical typology and familiar to anyone who has read Torrance's work at any length, raises the rather basic question: what is dualism? Torrance does not answer that question in a straightforward way. As Luoma notes, Torrance "fails to define the concept of dualism with sufficient accuracy." But Torrance is not alone in this, and his imprecision arises at least in part because "general definitions of the concept are so ambiguous."[21] It would be a mistake to understand Torrance's rejection of dualism as a rejection of all thinking in terms of duality. Torrance maintains clear dualities in his thought, such as the christological duality between Christ's divine and human natures, or the cosmological duality between God as creator and the creation. So dualism for Torrance is not simply duality. One has dualism rather than duality when the relationship between the two aspects of a duality is not properly conceived. Luoma explains that "the crucial issue [for Torrance's account of dualism] appears to be the nature of the relation between the poles involved," where dualism "distorts the balance between the poles" such that one subsumes the other.[22]

For Torrance, dualism occurs when two things that should be held together in a carefully ordered relationship are no longer understood as such. In such a scenario, one side will overcome the other, or they will be improperly separated. It is hard to ignore the overtones of Chalcedon here, which enjoins us to avoid confusing, changing, dividing, or separating the divine and human natures in Christ. While Torrance affirms Chalcedon, however, his thinking is far more influenced by the Nicene *homoousion*. Affirmation of true incarnation, of the unitive if necessarily differentiated relation between Father and Son, grounds the possibility of an analogously unitive if necessarily differentiated relation between God and the world. Dualism occurs, then, when a unitive relation between God and world as found in the *homoousion* is absent from view. Torrance articulates the importance of this connection with reference to Christian thinking about the relation between Creator and creation: "The distinctly Christian outlook upon the

20 One of the more accessible discussions of this historical trajectory and its multivalence is found in Thomas F. Torrance, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology: Consonance between Theology and Science* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 15–44. See also the brief discussion by Douglas Kelly, who identifies the importance of Maxwell and Gödel for a full-bodied account of this last stage in Torrance's historical typology: Douglas F. Kelly, "The Realist Epistemology of Thomas F. Torrance," in *An Introduction to Torrance Theology: Discovering the Incarnate Saviour*, ed. Gerrit Scott Dawson (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 94–95.

21 Luoma, *Incarnation and Physics*, 87.

22 Ibid., 91.

relation of God to the universe took shape as theologians thought through the bearing of the incarnation of the divine Logos. . . . One God, the Father Almighty, is the Creator of heaven and earth . . . , while the incarnate Son or Logos, through whom all things were made and in whom they hold together, is the central and creative source of all order and rationality within the created universe."[23] It is the incarnation, then, and the unitive forms of thought that derive from it, that overcomes the improperly disjunctive forms of thought that Torrance characterizes as dualism. Consequently, Luoma is correct when he observes that for Torrance "dualism is theologically reasoned" and "Christologically based."[24]

Dualism is, therefore, what is rejected when the Nicene *homoousion* is affirmed. But what then does this mean for Torrance's theology? What shape does this affirmation take? Torrance's rejection of dualism moves in both epistemological and cosmological directions, and for Torrance the epistemological issues derive from improper cosmological conceptions. The present essay's concern is with the cosmological aspect, and how Torrance's rejection of dualism impacts his approach to what he might call "theological ontology."[25] In other words, if we reject dualism and affirm the *homoousion*, what does that mean for theological ontology? There are three interrelated consequences that are pertinent for the purposes of this essay. They are Torrance's interactionism, his integration of

23 Thomas F. Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 2. Colyer comments that for Torrance the Nicene *homoousion* affirms the "undivided divine-human reality of Jesus Christ." Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, 72.

24 Luoma, *Incarnation and Physics*, 152. Torrance's describes the *homoousion* as "the lynchpin" of the "classical Christian theology" that opposed dualism. Torrance, *Ground and Grammar*, 39.

25 Torrance, "My Interaction," 124. For those interested in following up on the epistemological aspect of Torrance's rejection of dualism, there are three primary conceptual clusters to consider. The first is Torrance's account of the "epistemological inversion" that occurs when one engages in a properly scientific theology. Torrance, *Theological Science*, 131. Second, and closely related to the first, there is his discussion of properly scientific epistemology that functions *kata physin*, that is, according to the nature of its object of study. See Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological and Natural Science*, Theologos: The Torrance Collection (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 83. For more on these two points and how they fit into Torrance's epistemology in general and his theological epistemology in particular, see W. Travis McMaken, "The Impossibility of Natural Knowledge of God in T. F. Torrance's Reformulated Natural Theology," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12, no. 3 (2010), 320–26; Myk Habets, *Theology in Transposition: A Constructive Appraisal of T. F. Torrance* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 46–51. Third and finally, attention must be paid to Torrance's work on the stratification of knowledge. See Thomas F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology*, Theologos: The Torrance Collection (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 131–59; Habets, *Theology in Transposition*, 29–39; McGrath, *T. F. Torrance*, 168–74; Benjamin Myers, "The Stratification of Knowledge in the Thought of T. F. Torrance," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61, no. 1 (2008).

Christ's person and work, and his notion of onto-relations.

First, rather than improperly separating creation from the Creator, Torrance advocates an interactionist perspective. He advances this point in opposition to the second, Newtonian dualism from the historical typology mentioned above. The "Newtonian world-view" produced a "sophisticated deterministic outlook" that effectively shut God out of the world.[26] Of course, Torrance does not think that Newton alone is responsible for this, or that it is uniquely a problem of the early modern period. A few pages earlier he speaks of "the closed predetermination of Aristotelian final causes or the changeless natural law of the Stoics." The critical point, however, is that all these thought-worlds are opposed to "the concept of the creative interaction of God with the temporal order of the universe."[27] Rather than being apart from the created world, God's transcendence means God's presence in and interaction with the created world. What Torrance finds in thinkers like Einstein and others is a conception of the universe that fits with this picture of the created world as "intrinsically open" to God's interaction rather than "being closed in upon itself."[28] Although Torrance does much of his thinking about these matters in the context of the doctrine of creation, he also makes it clear that his thinking is finally controlled by the incarnation. The incarnation demonstrates the interactionist character of God's relation with the created world because it is there that God "interacts with the world and establishes . . . a relation between creaturely being and Himself." In the incarnation, God "asserts . . . the actuality of His relations with us."[29]

Second, and building on the importance of incarnation and especially hypostatic union in his interactionist account, Torrance emphasizes the importance of thinking in terms of internal rather than external relations. He brings this out especially when discussing soteriology, faulting "Western Christianity" for interpreting the atonement "almost exclusively in terms of external forensic relations" and "as a judicial transaction in the transference of the penalty for sin from the sinner to the sin-bearer."[30] In other words, sin is understood as an external thing that can be disconnected from the sinner and given to Christ. In Torrance's view, this both minimizes the seriousness of sin for human existence and misunderstands

26 Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order*, 75. For more on Newton, see Torrance, *Ground and Grammar*, 68–69.

27 Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order*, 69. See also Torrance's comments about "a covert Aristotelian type of deism." Torrance, *Ground and Grammar*, 63.

28 Torrance, *Theological and Natural Science*, 62.

29 Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 67.

30 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1992), 40.

the nature of Christ's saving significance. Instead of such an external view, "the Incarnation and the atonement are internally linked, for atoning expiation and propitiation are worked out in the ontological depths of human being and existence into which the Son of God penetrated" in the incarnation.[31] Salvation occurs as Jesus Christ reconciles human existence to God precisely by living a life of vicarious obedience under the conditions of that existence. His work of salvation is, therefore, internal to his person and unable to be separated from it. Believers share in that salvation precisely by being united with him in the power of the Holy Spirit. Myk Habets summarizes things nicely: "Torrance seeks to avoid . . . dualism and its resultant external, transactional notion of redemption in his incarnational model of atonement."[32]

Lest one think that Torrance's concern for thinking in terms of internal rather than external relations is limited to the intersection of christology and atonement, it is important, third and finally, to discuss Torrance's concept of onto-relations. Gary Deddo rightly sees Torrance's articulation of onto-relations as "a central, if not the central, element in Torrance's approach to theology."[33] Torrance's basic insight is trinitarian in nature and pertains to the status of the inter-trinitarian relations vis-à-vis the shared divine essence. In other words, how do the relations between Father, Son, and Spirit pertain to God's being? For Torrance, "these relations subsisting between them are just as substantial as what they are unchangeably in themselves. . . . That is to say, the relations between the divine Persons belong to what they are as Persons—they

31 Ibid., 41. For more on this prevalent theme in Torrance, see pp. 62–67; Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 22–23, 148–50; Thomas F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 37; Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 154, 158–61.

32 Myk Habets, *Theosis in the Theology of Thomas Torrance* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 50. It is worth noting that this aspect of Torrance's thought builds directly upon the foundation laid in his dissertation where, as seen above, he emphasized the identity of grace and Jesus's person. It also builds on the concern with which Calvin began the third book of his *Institutes*: "As long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), 3.1.1.

33 Gary Deddo, "T. F. Torrance: The Onto-Relational Frame of His Theology," *Princeton Theological Review* 39(2008), 37. Deddo's article is the best introduction to this subject in the secondary literature, but see also Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, 55–57, and 308–21. Consult Colyer's index for further discussion.

are constitutive onto-relations."[34] The mutually constitutive inter-relations between the three divine persons constitute the essence of the triune God, and the triune God has no substance apart from these relations. But this way of integrating relationality within ontology does not stop, for Torrance, with the Trinity. Precisely because God is onto-relationally constituted, we should not be surprised to find that creaturely being is similarly constructed. Onto-relational thinking is, consequently, "applicable in a creaturely way to persons in relation to one another" in a manner that "reflects the transcendent way in which the three divine Persons are interrelated in the Holy Trinity."[35] Furthermore, human being is constructed not only with reference to relationship with other creaturely realities, but also and primarily with reference to relationship with God.[36] In this way, Torrance's onto-relational thinking brings together his concern for unitive and interactionist rather than dualist thinking precisely by extending his concern for thinking in terms of internal rather than external relations.

2. Why did Torrance think that Barth had lapsed into dualism?

Two moves are necessary in answering this question. First, it is important to document Torrance's tendency to credit Barth for supplying him with—or at least providing fertile ground for the development of—Torrance's own analytic tools. This makes Torrance very sensitive to those places where he feels it necessary to disagree with Barth, and he tends to conceptualize these divergences as lapses or inconsistencies on Barth's part. Second, an account must be given for why it is that Barth's doctrine of baptism triggers Torrance's demurral. What factors

34 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 157. See further n.85 below.

35 Thomas F. Torrance, *Reality & Evangelical Theology: The Realism of Christian Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 43–44. Torrance also points to "modern particle theory and quantum theory" as examples of how contemporary science has "been forced to develop something like onto-relational notions." Torrance, *Ground and Grammar*, 175. As an extension of this, there are interesting connections to be made between Torrance's work on onto-relations and his advocacy for thinking in terms of a "relational notion" rather than a "receptacle notion" with reference to space and time. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation*, 56. One might be tempted to think this onto-relational pattern that includes both divine and creaturely being constitutes an analogy of being. It does, in a certain respect. But Torrance would not countenance an attempt to argue from the character of creaturely being to the character of divine being. The contingence of the created order prevents such an attempt. Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order*, 34. So any analogy of being present in Torrance's account of onto-relations is grounded first in the analogy of faith. This issue is bound up with interpretive questions surrounding Torrance and natural theology. For more on that subject, see n.42 below.

36 See Habets, *Theosis*, 40–41.

contributed to Torrance's interpretation of Barth's mature doctrine of baptism as dualist?

First, Torrance credits Barth for overcoming dualism in recent theology. Indeed, Torrance views this as one of Barth's most important achievements. In Torrance's autobiographical accounts, for instance, he speaks of his early encounter with Schleiermacher and the realization that the latter's theology "lacked any realist scientific objectivity." His reading of Augustine at the same time alerted him to the danger of "powerful Neoplatonic ingredients" that established "controlling presuppositions basically similar to those in Schleiermacher."[37] His encounter with Barth was more cheering but, despite Barth's rigorously scientific approach, "it appeared to be little more than a formal science and fell somewhat short of what [Torrance] had been looking for." But then Torrance encountered Barth's "doctrines of the hypostatic union" and the Trinity, and this provided the material content that Torrance needed to develop "a coherent and consistent account of Christian theology as an organic whole in a rigorously scientific way in terms of its objective truth."[38] Torrance nowhere explicitly identifies the problem of dualism in these reflections, and that is understandable considering that these are reflections on a period of his development before he had clearly conceptualized the problem in dualist terms. But his worries about Neoplatonism (in Augustine) and the lack of objectivity (in Schleiermacher), as well as his concern for thinking about Christianity as an organic whole on the basis of the incarnation, are nevertheless present. These reflections are materially consistent with his account of dualism even if they are not formally thematized as such.

Another example comes from Torrance's essay on Barth's theology and what Torrance calls the "Latin heresy." This heresy involves a tendency that Torrance identifies in the Western theological tradition to think "in abstractive formal relations" and "external relations." Torrance associates this tradition with figures such as Augustine and Newton, asserting that "its roots go back to . . . dualism that prevailed in Patristic and Medieval Latin theology."[39] The alternative is to think in terms of "internal relations." Such relations are patterned on the

37 Torrance, "My Interaction," 121–22.

38 Ibid., 123. Torrance also comments that "it belongs to the nature of the human spirit to reach out toward a unitary understanding of existence." Theology's role is to point to the Word of God as that which "addresses our intra-mundane contradictions . . . in order to point them to the only source of ultimate unity—in God." This is offered as a clarification of Barth's theology. Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology 1910–1931* (London: T&T Clark International 2004), 172.

39 Thomas F. Torrance, "Karl Barth and the Latin Heresy," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 39(1986), 463.

incarnation as explicated by the Nicene *homoousion*, which articulates the internal or ontological relation that obtains between the Father and Son in the Triune God.[40] Torrance associates this insight with the figures of Athanasius and especially Barth, going so far as to characterize his essay as an attempt "to direct attention to Karl Barth's non-dualist and holistic way of thinking in contrast to the dualist and abstractive modes of thought that came to be built into the infrastructure of Western theology."[41] Here Barth is the champion of dualism's rejection and thereby the ground upon which Torrance works to develop his own distinction between internal and external relations.

A final example is Torrance's essay on Barth and the problem of natural theology. It is here that Torrance most clearly articulates his distinction between interactionist and dualist accounts of how God relates to the created world. Natural theology, as traditionally conceived, depends on a dualist approach "in which God is thought of as separated from the world of nature and history by a measure of deistic distance."[42] Traditional forms of natural theology take for granted this separation between God and the created world, and then set about trying to bridge that separation from the human side. Barth is the hero of the story once again, rejecting all such attempts and returning focus—by way of a rigorously scientific theological method—to a properly natural theology, which Torrance says "thinks rigorously in accordance with the nature of the divine object" and is therefore "natural to the fundamental subject-matter of theology."[43] But the possibility of doing theology in this way depends on a key

40 Ibid., 464.

41 Ibid., 465.

42 Thomas F. Torrance, "The Problem of Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth," *Religious Studies* 6(1970), 121. I have written about Torrance and natural theology elsewhere. See McMaken, "Impossibility of Natural Knowledge of God." A diversity of opinions exists within Torrance studies concerning his work on natural theology. Habets helpfully summarizes the various positions on offer: "first, that Torrance's theology sponsors a natural theology that functions in an apologetic way (Alister McGrath); second, that Torrance's theology is consistently Barthian and allows no place for a traditional natural theology at all, even though Torrance was at times inconsistent with these intentions (Paul Molnar); and third, that Torrance consistently speaks of natural theology in the way we would normally speak of a theology of nature, and there is no inconsistency within his thoughts on this issue (Elmer M. Colyer, and W. Travis McMaken). It is my contention that there is a fourth way to read his theology, one that seeks to bring the natural and theological sciences into dialogue, which allows a soft apologetic role to natural theology, and yet, one that does not allow any strictly logical bridge to God from unaided human reason on the basis of natural revelation. I also contend that Torrance was less than clear or consistent in his use of and development of his transposed form of natural theology." Habets, *Theology in Transposition*, 85-86.

43 Torrance, "The Problem of Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth," 129.

presupposition, namely, that theology's subject matter—God—is available to it within the created world. This is where the incarnation's importance comes to the fore, because "the Incarnation means that the eternal Truth of God has entered time and for ever assumed historical form in Jesus Christ."[44] That this has occurred, however, demonstrates the insufficiency of the dualist conception whereby God is separated from the created world. It demands a unitive and interactionist approach, "one in which God is thought of as interacting closely with the world of nature and history without being confused with it."[45]

Second, Barth's doctrine of baptism triggers censure from Torrance in part because of historical alignment. Despite praising Barth for overcoming dualism with respect to natural theology, Torrance notes that "vestiges of this dualism persisted in Barth's thought, most notably in his understanding of the sacraments."[46] It is significant in this regard that Torrance's essay on Barth and natural theology was published in 1970, the same year in which Torrance first presented the "One Baptism" lecture where he explicitly criticized the dualism of Barth's doctrine of baptism. Torrance speaks of dualism in this context as "an operational disjunction between God and the world,"[47] a disjunction that prevents true encounter between God and humanity. Torrance finds such a disjunction in Barth's distinction between baptism with Spirit and with water. For his part, Torrance lauds "the mighty living God who interacts with what he has made in such a way that he creates genuine reciprocity between us and himself." Torrance then makes clear the incarnational foundation of this interactionist way of thinking about the relation between God and humanity: "This profound reciprocity in word and act is fulfilled in Christ . . . , for it is in hypostatic union that the self-giving of God really breaks through to man, when God becomes himself what man is and assumes man into a binding relation with his own being." Rejecting dualism and affirming the incarnation means developing a unitive and interactionist account of the relation between Spirit and water baptism. Indeed, Torrance had developed such an account already in the 1950s, as will be demonstrated in due course. Torrance may have hoped that Barth would join him in this constructive task but, on Torrance's reading, Barth finally remained caught within dualist patterns of thought.[48]

44 Ibid., 124.

45 Ibid., 121.

46 Ibid., 123.

47 Torrance, "One Baptism," 100.

48 Torrance tells the story of an *Auseinandersetzung* he had with Karl and Markus Barth when they came to Edinburgh in 1966 so that Karl could receive an honorary degree. At this point, Markus Barth had published his book on baptism. See Markus Barth, *Die Taufe - Ein*

It is likely that Eberhard Jüngel's interpretation of Barth's doctrine of baptism played some role in solidifying Torrance's criticism, as it did in the case of others.[49] Jüngel published an essay on Barth's doctrine of baptism in 1968—the year after Barth's publication of *KD* 4.4 in 1967, the year before the English translation was published in 1969, and two years before Torrance's criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism as vestigially dualist. In this essay, Jüngel argues that a shift took place in Barth's theology from what I have described elsewhere as a sacramental instrumentalism to a sacramental parallelism. The distinction between divine and human agency in Spirit and water baptism is so sharp, on Jüngel's reading, that Barth correlates the agencies exclusively with the different forms of baptism. So, "water baptism is just as exclusively a human action as Spirit baptism is exclusively a divine action."[50] The two forms of baptism correspond to each other so that, for instance, the divine act of Spirit baptism may elicit the human act of water baptism. But they remain distinct acts that are performed by distinct agents in their respective spheres. Like parallel lines, these acts never meet. Such a thoroughgoing distinction between divine and human action, Spirit and water baptism, clearly falls within the boundaries of what Torrance calls dualism. Rather than integrating God and the created world in a holistic, unitive way, Jüngel's reading of Barth seems to separate them. Rather than understanding Spirit and water baptism as internally related, there seems only to be an external relation—or, as Torrance also describes this distinction, there is "not an ontological [i.e., internal] but merely a moral [i.e., external]" relation.[51]

Sakrament?: Ein Exegetischer Beitrag Zum Gespräch Über Die Kirchliche Taufe (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, AG., 1951). Karl Barth had already given his lectures on baptism that would become *CD* 4.4, and he was in the process of revising them for publication. Torrance recounts that the conversation was primarily between himself and Markus, with Torrance arguing "for an understanding of Baptism as the Sacrament of the vicarious obedience of Christ." This reportedly elicited the comment from Karl: "*Nicht so schlecht, Markus!*" Torrance, "My Interaction," 135. Of course, Barth proceeded to publish his baptism lectures the following year in a form that Torrance felt compelled to oppose.

49 John Webster, for instance, is influenced by Jüngel in important ways in his criticism of Barth's mature doctrine of baptism. See W. Travis McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft? Reassessing Barth's Doctrine of Baptism in Church Dogmatics IV/4," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17, no. 1 (2015), 92.

50 Eberhard Jüngel, "Karl Barths Lehre Von Der Taufe: Ein Hinweis Auf Ihre Probleme," in *Barth-Studien* (Zürich: Benziger, 1982), 258. See McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 90.

51 Torrance, "Karl Barth and the Latin Heresy," 464.

3. What was Torrance's alternative to Barth's alleged baptismal dualism?

The doctrine of baptism became a focal point for Torrance when he was named in 1954 as Convener of the Church of Scotland Commission on Baptism, a post which persisted until the commission completed its work in 1962. This body produced a number of lengthy reports which, taken together, comprised hundreds of pages of material. Torrance certainly left his mark on this material, although the exigencies of committee work mean we cannot take them straightforwardly as his own work.[52] However, Torrance also published a number of essays on baptism in the second half of the 1950s that provide us with a sure touchstone of his own thinking on the topic.[53] These essays contain the key moves that will resurface once again in his "One Baptism" essay in the early 1970s. Furthermore, these moves are consistent with his rejection of dualism, which would come into the open in the 1960s. Torrance's doctrine of baptism in these essays prioritizes thinking in terms of internal rather than external relations, especially with reference to the relation of water and Spirit baptism. Indeed, one might even say that water baptism's relation to Spirit baptism is a constitutive onto-relation for water baptism. Such an onto-relational account

52 McGrath provides a brief discussion of Torrance's work with the commission. See McGrath, *T. F. Torrance*, 99–101. Torrance's son, Iain, stresses in his review of McGrath that this work was shared especially by John Heron, the commission's secretary. See Iain Torrance, "Review of Alister Mcgrath, 'Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography'," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62, no. 4 (2009), 513. Although Torrance's was not the only intellect involved in the framing of this material, Bryan Spinks notes that "much of the drafting [of these reports] was in the hands of the Convener." The result is that "a 'Torrance flavour' to these reports is not too difficult to discern." Bryan D. Spinks, "'Freely by His Grace': Baptismal Doctrine and the Reform of the Baptismal Liturgy in the Church of Scotland, 1953-1994," in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith: Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanaugh*, ed. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldovin (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 220.

53 These essays were originally published in 1956 and 1958, and are collected in Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.93–132. Because most explications of Torrance's doctrine of baptism focus on his "One Baptism" essay, as the notes from the following studies make clear, I will develop the material commitments of Torrance's doctrine of baptism from these earlier essays. See Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, 263–66; George Hunsinger, "The Dimension of Depth: Thomas F. Torrance on the Sacraments," in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T. F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 144; Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance*, 295–306; Alexis Torrance, "The Theology of Baptism in T. F. Torrance and Its Ascetic Correlate in St. Mark the Monk," *Participatio* 4(2013). Torrance's sacramentology also contains an interesting eschatological component that, unfortunately, cannot be treated here. This material appears in virtually identical form in the following places: Torrance, *Atonement*, 305–308; Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 148–50.

enables Torrance to make the corollary interactionist claim, namely, that it is Jesus Christ who acts as baptizer.

Perhaps the cornerstone of Torrance's doctrine of baptism, conceptually speaking, is the distinction that he notes between two Greek terms: *baptisma* and *baptismos*. The latter term is what one would expect the New Testament writers to use, while the former is the one they actually use. Furthermore, *baptisma* is not attested in pre-Christian Greek literature. This suggests that the early Christian community intended to distinguish in some way its ritual of purification through water from other such rituals.[54] Torrance notes all this, and then takes the further step of supplying a theological rationale to fit this linguistic use. The term *baptisma* is preferred, on his reading, because of its similarity to *kerygma*. In both cases, one finds a human action—whether that be the church's verbal proclamation of the Gospel or its sacramental sealing of that Gospel in baptism—that serves as a transparent point of access to God's action in Christ. So Torrance: "Just as *kerygma* does not call attention to the preacher or the preaching but only to Christ Himself, so *baptisma* by its very nature does not direct attention to itself as a rite . . . or to him who administers it, but directs us at once beyond to Christ Himself and to what He has done on our behalf."[55]

Torrance trades on a distinction between water and Spirit baptism in his discussion, but the distinction is present only insofar as it is overcome. He speaks of Christian baptism's "double form" of "Baptism in water from below" and "Baptism in heavenly water from above, that is, in the Spirit."[56] But all of this is secondary because the practice and theology of Christian baptism "is determined . . . by the event of Christ's Baptism and by all it involved for Him on our behalf."[57] Water baptism, then, is an access-point for Spirit baptism, whereby one is put in touch with Jesus' own baptism by John in the Jordan. This is why, on Torrance's account, it is designated by the term *baptisma*. Although Torrance does not use the language explicitly here, what he describes is an internal relationship between water baptism and Spirit baptism such that water baptism is related to Spirit baptism in an ontological rather than in a merely moral manner. Furthermore, water baptism as *baptisma* cannot be understood as possessing an existence independent of Spirit baptism. This ritual of purification

54 Markus Barth, "Baptism," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. Keith Crim (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 80; Lars Hartman, "Baptism," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 583.

55 Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.111.

56 Ibid., 2.109.

57 Ibid., 2.108.

with water exists as *baptisma* in its internal relation to Spirit baptism, or it does not exist as *baptisma* at all. This internal relation is determinative of water baptism's existence as *baptisma* and is therefore an onto-relation.

On Torrance's account, Spirit baptism refers to how water baptism actualizes in the present Jesus' own baptism by John in the Jordan. Jesus' baptism is important for Torrance because of its unique place in Jesus' history: it stands at an intermediate point, harkening back to Christ's birth and forward to his death.[58] As a result, it becomes symbolic of the whole of his saving person and work. For Torrance, Jesus saves by enacting through the incarnation a perfect and vicarious obedience to God. This means that Jesus obeys God in the place of all other human persons, and that salvation is nothing less than being united to Jesus through the Holy Spirit—an internal, ontological relation rather than an external, moral one—and thereby sharing in that obedience. Because of the symbolic positioning of Jesus' baptism by John in this story of his vicarious obedience, Torrance understands baptism as "above all the Sacrament of that vicarious obedience."[59] Indeed, even Jesus' baptism by John, a baptism of repentance, was vicarious in that Jesus underwent that repentance perfectly and in the place of sinners. Baptism, then, concerns one's incorporation into "Christ's vicarious Baptism" that includes "all He did to fulfil righteousness from His Baptism in the Jordan to His crucifixion on the Cross."[60]

The payoff of this emphasis on baptism as baptism into Jesus' own baptism, and therefore into the vicarious significance of his whole life and death, is the interactionist affirmation that it is Jesus who baptizes. This is because it is not finally the ritual of purification with water that is significant, but how that ritual exists as *baptisma* by way of its onto-relation with Spirit baptism, which actualizes for the baptizand Jesus' own baptism and its significance. Consequently, as Torrance puts it: "It is Christ in His life-act . . . who is always present with us to the end of the world; so that when we in His Name proclaim the *kerygma* and administer the *baptisma* it is actually Christ Himself, really and fully present, who

58 Ibid., 2.112.

59 Ibid., 2.124.

60 Ibid., 2.113. Hunsinger rightly brings out the significance of Christ's vicarious humanity in Torrance's doctrine of baptism, noting that "vicarious humanity means that everything Christ has done and suffered in his humanity was done and suffered in our place and for our benefit." Hunsinger, "Dimension of Depth," 144. Much more recently on the subject of Christ's vicarious humanity, Andrew Purves identifies it as a shared characteristic of the three Scottish theologians John McLeod Campbell, H. R. Mackintosh, and Torrance. Andrew Purves, *Exploring Christology & Atonement: Conversations with John Mcleod Campbell, H. R. Mackintosh and T. F. Torrance* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 11. The theme runs throughout Purves' volume.

acts savingly in His Church, revealing Himself and baptizing with His Spirit."[61] Here is no dualist separation between divine and human action. Rather, water and Spirit baptism are connected onto-relationally, and the resulting *baptisma* is permeated by divine activity. It is Jesus Christ who is the agent of *baptisma*.

Moving forward to Torrance's "One Baptism" essay, one finds much of the same material despite some linguistic development.[62] Torrance foregrounds his understanding of *baptisma* as the onto-relational integration of the Christian ritual of purification with water and Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan—hence the titular "One Baptism Common to Christ and His Church." This language is not new, however. It appeared in the earlier essays in passing, and it also appeared in the 1962 report from the Church of Scotland Commission on Baptism.[63] Torrance also makes central the language of baptism's "dimension of depth" as a way to describe the integration of the baptismal ritual and its basis in Jesus' baptism. But this language is also not new. Torrance speaks of *baptisma*'s "dimension of objectivity" in his 1958 essay, and "dimension of depth" appears in the Church of Scotland Commission on Baptism report from 1955.[64] As a way of describing

61 Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.111–12.

62 Colyer notes that "there is little [in the essays on baptism from the 1950s] that is not also in the later essays." Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, 263. By "later essays" Colyer means Torrance's "One Baptism" essay, as well as the discussion of baptism found in Torrance's *Trinitarian Faith*. But Colyer also describes that discussion as "essentially a summary of part of the earlier essay," meaning the "One Baptism" essay. See Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 289–301. My claim here moves in the opposite direction from Colyer's, namely, there is little in the later essays that is not first in the 1950s essays.

63 Torrance, "One Baptism," 86; Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.115; Church of Scotland, "Report of the Special Commission on Baptism," in *Reports to the General Assembly with the Legislative Acts* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and T. & A. Constable, 1962), 714.

64 Torrance, "One Baptism," 83, 88; Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.113; Church of Scotland, "Interim Report of the Special Commission on Baptism," in *Reports to the General Assembly with the Legislative Acts* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and T. & A. Constable, 1955), 615. Torrance spoke in 1962 of "the dimension of depth" when expositing Barth's account of *ratio* in Anselm, specifically the distinction and relation between the objective *ratio* of God and the *ratio* of human knowledge of God. Torrance, *Karl Barth*, 187. It appears also in his christology lectures, although it is hard to say when the phrase entered this material. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*, 180. Torrance's use of "depth" language here is likely related to the practice of "depth exegesis" that he learned from William Manson. See Torrance's introduction to William Manson, *Jesus and the Christian* (London: James Clarke, 1967). Torrance there writes that Manson "influenced me more intimately than any other of my teachers and over the years he had become to me more and more a spiritual father" (p. 9), and Torrance singles-out Manson's "depth exegesis" as a necessary response to form criticism (p. 10). See also the discussions in Darren Sarisky, "T. F. Torrance on Biblical Interpretation," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11, no. 3 (2009), 334–35; John Webster, "T. F. Torrance on Scripture," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65, no. 1 (2012), 49.

how *baptisma* should be approached in view of its depth-dimension, Torrance advocates what he calls "a stereo-understanding of the one baptism" whereby the two levels of *baptisma*—the rite of purification with water and Jesus' own baptism—are integrated such that neither can be entirely understood apart from the other.[65] Another linguistic emphasis that emerges is the importance of *koinonia* as a way of describing the onto-relations that obtain between God and Christians, which are enacted in *baptisma*. To be a Christian means to have one's being as such constituted by and in relation to the Triune God.[66]

This charting of linguistic development-in-continuity helps to make the point that Torrance is working with the same fundamental material doctrine of baptism in both the 1950s essays and the "One Baptism" essay. There are, however, two aspects of his discussion in the "One Baptism" essay that, while not entirely new elements, represent important development in emphasis. The first of these is how the latter essay frames the discussion of baptism within an analysis of the problem of dualism, as was previously discussed. This is to be expected, given that Torrance's concern about rejecting dualism developed in the 1960s and came to open expression especially in the early 1970s. But, as also noted previously, Torrance's concern about rejecting dualism grew organically out of aspects of his thought that are traceable even back into the 1930s. It is thus no surprise to find in his discussion of baptism from the 1950s a brief discussion of "Schleiermacher's radical dichotomy between a realm of sensuous events and a realm of spiritual ideas" that "denies the very essence of the Gospel of Incarnation." Furthermore, this dichotomy denies the incarnation insofar as it disrupts the "binding together into a new unity" of God and humanity in the incarnation.[67] Here are all the hallmarks of Torrance's understanding of dualism, both in terms of its opposition to the incarnation and an interactionist account of

65 Torrance, "One Baptism," 92. Stereoscopic language appears in Torrance's later discussion of baptism as well. See Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 294. Torrance also speaks of "stereoscopic viewing" with reference to the importance of integrating a "picture" of "the historical Jesus" with that of "the risen Jesus" in order to "see and understand Jesus Christ as he is in reality." Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection*, 166–67.

66 This is a development of the language of "Covenant-Communion" that Torrance used in his earlier discussion. Torrance, "One Baptism," 82; Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.123. Hunsinger makes "*koinonia*-relations" central to his discussion of baptism, defining such a relation as "a relation of mutual indwelling between two terms . . . with the result that they coexist in a unity-in-distinction." George Hunsinger, "Baptism and the Soteriology of Forgiveness," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, no. 3 (2000), 248. The logic of Chalcedon is clearly in view here. While Hunsinger does not note it explicitly, one might easily suspect that his thought on this count has been significantly influenced by Torrance.

67 Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, 2.126–27.

the relation between God and the created order.

The later "One Baptism" essay foregrounds this angle of analysis, and this shift in emphasis correlates with Torrance's criticism of Barth. This correlation suggests that Torrance's detection of dualism in Barth's mature doctrine of baptism led him in turn to advance a self-consciously and explicitly non-dualist, interactionist account as an extension of the implicitly non-dualist and interactionist account he provided in the 1950s. Further corroboration arises from the second point concerning development of emphasis in Torrance's "One Baptism" essay vis-à-vis the 1950s material, namely, his increased attention to the distinction between water and Spirit baptism. This received only the most cursory discussion in the 1950s material. But Torrance has identified Barth's treatment of this distinction as the central failing of Barth's mature doctrine of baptism, and so Torrance must now address it at greater length. He does so by way of a patristic study that focuses especially on "the anonymous *De rebaptismate* of the third century."[68] Although providing a more extensive discussion of this point, Torrance maintains the importance of providing a unitive account of water and Spirit baptism, of seeing them in a "binocular way."[69] Therefore, and just as in the 1950s material, the distinction between water and Spirit baptism is raised—albeit in a more sustained manner—only to be overcome. As Torrance says, speaking in the context of patristic reflection on baptism not only of Spirit and water but also of blood: "baptism may appear to be divided in a three-fold way, baptism in water, baptism in blood and baptism in Spirit, but actually they are one baptism in Jesus Christ."[70]

Despite linguistic developments and shifts in emphasis, Torrance's doctrine of baptism remains remarkably consistent from its expression in the 1950s to the 1970s. It is christologically focused from first to last, committed to emphasizing the unity of water and Spirit baptism, and explicitly interactionist. Consequently, it is also anti-dualist—whether implicitly so in the 1950s or explicitly so in the 1970s. These and other strands of his doctrine of baptism come together at both stages in an affirmation that Jesus is the agent of baptism, which he expresses as follows in the later essay: "when the Church baptizes in his name, it is actually Christ himself who is savingly at work, pouring out his Spirit upon us and drawing us within the power of his vicarious life, death and resurrection."[71]

68 Torrance, "One Baptism," 90–91.

69 Ibid., 91.

70 Ibid., 92.

71 Ibid., 83. There is irony in noting that the claim that Jesus is finally the agent of baptism goes back at least as far as Augustine, whose tradition Torrance routinely criticizes for its dualism. So Augustine: "Peter may baptize, but this is He [i.e., Jesus Christ] that baptizeth; Paul

4. Was Torrance right in his criticism of Barth?

Answering this question requires making a distinction that Torrance failed to make in his criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism. On the one side is the question of *being*. Torrance criticizes Barth for succumbing to ontological dualism in his distinction between water and Spirit baptism, such that divine action and human action are not properly integrated in a unitive account. For his part, Torrance purports to offer an account that unites water and Spirit baptism such that there is an integration of divine and human action. On the other side is the question of *meaning*. Torrance also claims that the meaning or significance of baptism requires focusing a doctrine of baptism on Spirit baptism and God's activity rather than on water baptism and the church's human activity. So he writes: "while baptism in water is by no means dispensable, so far as our salvation is concerned we must look to the baptism of the Spirit. . . . [T]he whole significance of baptism was seen to be lodged, not in the due administration of the rite as such . . . but in him unto whom we are baptised."[72] While it is possible that a doctrine of baptism that finds baptism's meaning in its character as a human action is also a doctrine of baptism plagued by an ontological dualism between divine and human action, this is not necessarily the case. It is entirely possible to find baptism's meaning in its character as a human action while simultaneously avoiding ontological dualism. Indeed, I argue that Barth has advanced just such a position.

As noted previously, Torrance's understanding of Barth's account of the relation between divine and human agency in his mature doctrine of baptism is consistent with Jüngel's interpretation. Jüngel's position is properly described as parallelist, in opposition to those interpreters of Barth who advocate a sacramental theology articulated in more traditionally instrumentalist terms. These latter interpreters tend to agree with Jüngel's explication of Barth's mature doctrine of baptism, including his positing of a shift in Barth's thought from an earlier instrumentalist position to his later parallelism. They simply prefer the earlier material. This interpretation of Barth's thought is insufficient, however. There was no shift in Barth's thought from an early instrumentalism to a later parallelism. Rather, there was a development in the complexity of his

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may baptize, yet this is He that baptizeth; Judas may baptize, still this is He that baptizeth." Augustine, "Homilies on the Gospel of John," in *St. Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, ed. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), §6.7; 41.

72 Torrance, "One Baptism," 93.

thought from an early instrumentalism to a later position that both integrated the concerns and surpassed the limitations of the instrumentalist and parallelist dichotomy. Torrance was caught up in this false dichotomy between an earlier, instrumentalist Barth who forged ahead in rejecting dualism and a later, parallelist Barth who succumbed to vestigial dualism. Like many others, this misdirection led him to undervalue the evidence that Barth was working with a much more subtle understanding of the relation between divine and human action in his doctrine of baptism. I categorize Barth's position with the language of paradoxical identity.[73]

In essence, paradoxical identity describes the relationship between divine and human action neither in terms of divine action working *through* human action, nor in terms of divine action working *alongside* human action. These are the instrumentalist and parallelist positions, respectively. Paradoxical identity builds on the logic of the Chalcedonian Definition in an effort to describe the relation between divine and human action such that they are not confused, changed, divided, or separated. Furthermore, paradoxical identity articulates this relation in actualistic terms that focus on the event or occurrence of divine action, rather than on persistent relations between static essences.[74] The eternal Son assumed

73 On the reception of Barth's doctrine of baptism, see McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 89–92; McMaken, *Sign of the Gospel*, 38–55. On whether there is a shift in Barth from an early instrumentalism to a late parallelism, see especially McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 93–97. On the concept of paradoxical identity, see ibid., 98–107; McMaken, *Sign of the Gospel*, 240–50. The language of "paradoxical identity" comes from Rudolf Bultmann. For an excellent introduction to his usage that correctly identifies it as the development of an insight that was centrally important to Barth's theology from the second edition of his *Römerbrief* on, see David W. Congdon, *The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann's Dialectical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 633–36.

74 In his recent study of Barth's christology, Darren Sumner notes that "the Word's becoming flesh is indeed a paradox." Darren O. Sumner, *Karl Barth and the Incarnation: Christology and the Humility of God*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 84. On Barth's actualism, see George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 30; Richard Burnett, ed. *The Westminster Handbook to Karl Barth*, Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 1–3. As I have stated elsewhere, I intend paradoxical identity "as a defense, extension and development" of George Hunsinger's account of "double agency." See McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 103, n.50. It is an attempt to conceptually redescribe—in an actualist mode that further emphasizes the event-character of the relation between divine and human action—the asymmetrical unity-in-distinction articulated by the Chalcedonian Definition and theorized by Hunsinger as the "Chalcedonian Pattern." See Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 185–87.

It is interesting that Calvin applies a kind of actualist analysis to the relation between divine and human action in his commentary on Malachi 4:6: "When then is it that teachers are co-workers with God? Even when God, ruling them by his Spirit, at the same time blesses

human existence and all of its limitations, thereby enacting a history of human life lived in perfect, obedient covenant partnership with God. It is therefore proper to speak of the life that the eternal Son lived *as* a human being. The incarnation confesses the identity of divine and human being and action in a paradoxical manner that does not allow for the incarnation to be resolved in a reductionist way to either the human or divine side. Just so, paradoxical identity means that when divine action occurs—i.e., in the *event* of divine action—it occurs *as* human action. The human action is, then, identical with divine action in a non-reductively paradoxical way.[75] Consequently, the event must be described both entirely as a human and entirely as divine, just as Jesus's history is both entirely human and entirely divine.

Similarly, baptism can be described as entirely water baptism and entirely Spirit baptism such that the two forms of baptism are paradoxically identical.[76] This is the conceptual superstructure that enables Barth to approach the topic of baptism by first describing one side and then the other, Spirit baptism and then water baptism. Indeed, he appeals to the logic of Chalcedon in relating the two, at points sounding very much like Torrance: "baptism with water is what it is only in relation to baptism with the Holy Spirit," one must maintain the "unity of the two in their distinction," and "each of the elements . . . will be misunderstood

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their labour, so that it brings forth fruit." John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelves Minor Prophets, Volumes 4 & 5: Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, trans. John Owen, Calvin Translation Society ed., Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2003), 5.630. Calvin assumes that teachers are not always co-teachers with God, but only become so in the event of the Spirit's blessing their work.

75 As I have noted elsewhere, paradoxical identity between divine and human action outside of Jesus' history must be understood as analogous to that which occurred within that history insofar as it is a secondary and derivative form of the relation between God and humanity that is constitutively and definitively enacted in that history. See McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 106, n.58. Theologians of a more analytic bent might object to the language of paradox here by arguing that it is unnecessarily ambiguous. A paradox is always either real or apparent, we might imagine them insisting. If it is real then we should admit that we are dealing with the mystery of God and leave it at that, and if it is apparent then we should explain the resolution and thereby avoid the opaque language of paradox. However, speaking of "paradoxical" identity is salutary insofar as it attempts to communicate the eventful dynamic at play. It reinforces that the identity in question is neither merely mysterious nor a resolved state of affairs, but something that occurs in the event of divine action. Only in this event is the real paradox of identity between divine and human action resolved and recognized in the experience and confession of faith.

76 One might make an analogy here to Barth's doctrine of scripture to say that the being of water baptism is in becoming Spirit baptism. See Bruce L. McCormack, "The Being of Holy Scripture Is in Becoming: Karl Barth in Conversation with American Evangelical Criticism," in *Evangelicals & Scripture: Tradition, Authority and Hermeneutics*, ed. Vincent Bacote, Laura C. Miguélez, and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

if it is either separated from or . . . mixed together or confused with the other."[77] Furthermore, and contrary to Jüngel's allegation that Barth understands Spirit baptism as exclusively divine action and water baptism as exclusively human action, Barth provides for a unitive account of divine and human action on both sides. He acknowledges that divine action is not foreign to water baptism and that human action is not foreign to Spirit baptism. Both are present in their proper character as theorized by the concept of paradoxical identity.[78]

With reference to Torrance's desire for a unitive account of the relation between divine and human action that avoids ontological dualism, it is hard to see how one could be more unitive than this. In fact, the only way to do so would be to promote a straightforward rather than paradoxical identity. But this would be to reduce divine to the human or the human to the divine, thus violating the Chalcedonian logic of the incarnation. Given that Barth maintains such a deeply unitive account of the relation between divine and human action in his doctrine of baptism, it is necessary to conclude that Torrance's criticism of Barth at the level of *being*—i.e., as ontologically dualist in his doctrine of baptism—fails decisively. Barth's position does not contain compromising vestiges of dualism but articulates a highly complex and subtle account of the relation between divine and human action that overcomes the tension in the Reformed tradition between instrumentalist and parallelist accounts.[79]

There remains, however, Torrance's criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism at the level of *meaning*. As noted above, Torrance locates the meaning of baptism not in the human action of baptizand or church to undergo or administer water baptism, respectively, but in Jesus Christ as the administer of baptism in all its dimensions of depth. The contrast to Barth on this point is striking, for Barth carefully avoids speaking of water baptism as a divine act, even if, as just described, he does not deny the involvement of divine action. He avoids

77 *CD* 4.4, 41; *KD*, 4.4, 45. As I note elsewhere, Barth's way of describing the unity between water and Spirit baptism here is similar to his way of describing the unity between Jesus' death and resurrection. See McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 99–100.

78 For a more detailed explication of Barth's mature doctrine of baptism that is concerned with making this case, see ibid., 107–11; McMaken, *Sign of the Gospel*, 250–57. Key passages in Barth are to be found in *CD* 4.4, 32, 106; *KD*, 4.4, 35, 116. Ashley Cocksworth helpfully notes the importance of the role of prayer for properly understanding Barth's way of relating water and Spirit baptism: "The charge of agential separation is difficult to sustain once baptism is understood to be prayer." Ashley Cocksworth, *Karl Barth on Prayer*, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 120.

79 See B. A. Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," in *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

speaking of it as such precisely in order to emphasize water baptism's meaning as a human act. He highlights this at the head of his section that explicitly addresses water baptism's meaning (*Sinn*): "the meaning of baptism which we now seek is the meaning of this human action as such," that is, the human act of water baptism as it responds in faithful obedience to God's act of Spirit baptism.[80]

Furthermore, Barth worries about the specter of docetism in much the same way that Torrance worries about dualism. The danger in an account of water baptism, for Barth, is that its character as a human act will be evacuated of meaning such that the proper relationship between water baptism and Spirit baptism, characteristically human and characteristically divine action, breaks down. Rather than understanding each side in its integrity, they are confused, changed, separated, or divided, to draw once more upon the terms of the Chalcedonian Definition. The consequence is that baptism becomes "a strangely competitive duplication of the history of Jesus Christ, of His resurrection, of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."[81]

When it comes to the question of where to locate baptism's meaning, then, Torrance and Barth are diametrically opposed. This naturally raises the question of why they should be so. Perhaps it is a question of context, such that practical theologians should be left to adjudicate between them based on the missionary needs of particular churches in particular times and places. Perhaps it is a question of where one plants one's feet among the various discussions of baptism in the New Testament. On this score, Barth is firmly planted in the ethical perspective on baptism that he finds in Romans 6 especially, whereas Torrance is invested in his conjectures concerning the reason for the use by New Testament authors of the strange term *baptisma* rather than the common *baptismos*.[82] However, both of these avenues for reflection are finally variations on the notion that, when it comes to differences between Barth and Torrance, those differences are simply matters of emphasis. Or, to use a turn of phrase from John Webster, the differences are "descriptive rather than principled."

80 *CD* 4.4, 101 (rev.); *KD*, 4.4, 111.

81 *CD* 4.4, 102; *KD*, 4.4, 112.

82 My own constructive work on the doctrine of baptism can perhaps be seen as a mediating position insofar as it plants itself in Matthew 28 and understands baptism as a form of the church's missionary proclamation. See McMaken, *Sign of the Gospel*, 209–74; McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 113–14. My constructive position—developed in a manner consistent with Barth's mature dogmatics—also allows for the baptism of infants, which was an important point of divergence between the doctrines of baptism offered by Barth and Torrance. This divergence is downstream, as it were, from the material treated in this essay and therefore has not been given pride of place.

5. Where lies the disconnect between Barth and Torrance?

This essay has undertaken to explicate Torrance's criticism of Barth as both a criticism that arises from *Torrance's own theological commitments* and as a criticism of *Barth's doctrine of baptism*. That work is now complete. I have articulated how important themes in Torrance's theology, like the rejection of dualism and onto-relations, came together in his criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism. And I have set that rejection against the backdrop of Torrance's own doctrine of baptism. Furthermore, I have argued that Torrance's criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism as compromised by vestigial dualism does not succeed, although there is a very real disagreement between Torrance and Barth on the question of where to locate the meaning of baptism—whether in divine or in human action. Such disagreements between Barth and Torrance are usually treated as matters of divergent emphasis rather than as matters of material difference.

Although there is some risk of overemphasizing the distance between Barth and Torrance, an analysis of the relationship between their respective bodies of theological work cannot rest with an appeal to divergent emphasis. Instead, we must penetrate to the theological structures and conditions at work in their respective thought-worlds that produce this apparent divergence in emphasis. George Hunsinger's reflection on Barth and Torrance offers a productive starting point. He couches matters in terms of his "motifs":

> Barth's early theology has been called "revolutionary theology in the making" and the "theology of crisis." From Torrance, however, one cannot help but feel that one is somehow getting revolutionary theology without the revolution, and the theology of crisis without the crisis. The energy, dynamism, and sense of collision which enter Barth's theology by way of the actualistic and particularistic motifs never quite come through in Torrance's account. Instead of actualism and particularism enlivening the objectivism, the objectivism is allowed to mute and soften the actualism and particularism.[83]

Much of the difference that Hunsinger identifies here can be excused as a matter of emphasis or even of style. But Hunsinger also lays his finger on the headwater of these various divergences, namely, the question of actualism.

To be clear, the issue is not that Barth's thinking is actualist and Torrance's thinking is not actualist. If actualism is a habit of mind that thinks in terms

83 Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, 11. Molnar addresses criticisms of Torrance, including Hunsinger's. However, Hunsinger's criticism is enumerated among a number of others, and Molnar's reply tends to address those other criticisms. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance*, 328–32.

of dynamic relations rather than static conditions, then Torrance's thought is marked by actualism. How could it be otherwise for someone who so emphasized relations in his theology—whether internal, onto-relations as a positive value or external relations as a negative value? The deep divergence between Barth and Torrance, then, is a divergence between *two different kinds of actualism*. To put it simply: Torrance's actualism *essentializes relations*, while Barth's *historicizes essences*.

As noted in the previous discussion of onto-relations, Torrance conceives of the relations between the three persons of the Trinity as constitutive of the divine essence.[84] This basic insight is not restricted to the divine being, however, and Torrance also thinks of creaturely being as onto-relational. The relations that obtain between different creatures, aspects, and levels of creaturely reality—and especially those between the creature and God—are constitutive for the creature's being. This takes the traditional concept of "essence" and enriches it with a new relational dynamism, which Torrance understands as fitting, given recent developments in physics. This essentializing of relations bears fruit in Torrance's christology in his architectural distinction between discussion of "The Once and for all Union of God and Man" and "The Continuous Union in the Life of Jesus."[85] Torrance intends to provide a unitive account of who Christ *is*—i.e., his person, or being—and what Christ *does*—i.e., the saving significance of his life, or how he relates to others. This essentializing of relations is also evident in Torrance's assessment of Barth's significance. For instance, he thinks that one of Barth's "most important contributions to Christian theology" was the way he "combined the Patristic emphasis upon the being of God in his acts and the

84 One must be careful to avoid giving the impression that this essentializing of relations in the being of the Triune God introduces an improper social trinitarianism into Torrance's thought. His commitment to the oneness or simplicity of God rules out such a conclusion. For Torrance, each of the divine persons is constituted by way of their relations with each other, and it is this web of interrelation that constitutes the divine being or *ousia* as such. So Torrance speaks of "the one Being of God which all three divine Persons have in common: *ousia* is, in fact, identical with the personal Being or intrinsic Communion that the one God is in himself." Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 131. What Torrance attempts in all this is to conceptually articulate the dialectic captured by a passage from Gregory of Nazianzus that Torrance often quotes. It reads in part: "I cannot think of the One without immediately being surrounded by the radiance of the Three; nor can I discern the Three without at once being carried back to the One" (p. 201; see also the slightly different translation that Torrance gives on p. 112, and the accompanying citations for Calvin's quotation of this passage). For more on this aspect of Torrance's trinitarian theology, see Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, 308–13; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2004), 367–69; Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance*, 59–61.

85 See respectively, Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*, 87–104 and 105–60.

Reformation emphasis upon the acts of God in his being."[86] In each of these cases, the categories of what a thing is (being) and how it relates to others (action) are integrated such that it is impossible to consider being without understanding relation as ingredient to being. In other words, Torrance essentializes relations.

Barth puts into place a different form of actualism insofar as he historicizes essences. In a passage that sounds very much like Torrance's approach, Barth writes that Jesus' being "is a being, but a being in a history." But Barth elucidates this statement in ways that Torrance does not. For instance, Jesus' being as the unity of God and humanity "takes place in the *event* of God and the concrete existence of this man."[87] The central place that the language and concept of "event" (*Ereignis*) has in Barth's actualism sets him apart from Torrance. Indeed, Torrance criticizes Barth for this, asserting that it is a feature of Barth's thought that "has its roots in an Augustinian and Lutheran dualism" and results in a lack of attention to "the ontology of creaturely structures."[88] But this event-character has been central to Barth's thought from first to last, giving Barth's actualism a more radical aspect than Torrance's. To return to Barth's christology, he writes of Jesus Christ that "His being . . . is His history, and His history is this His being."[89]

86 Respectively, Torrance, "Legacy of Karl Barth," 172; Torrance, "My Interaction," 124.

87 *CD* 4.1, 126 (rev.); *KD* 4.1, 138. Emphasis restored.

88 Torrance, "The Problem of Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth," 122, 133–34. There is irony here since Torrance is often charged with a failure to adequately describe the human aspect in baptism, scripture (see n.83 above), or in the relation between divine and human action (see n.8 above). It is important to note, however, that a forthcoming essay by Todd Speidell argues that some prevailing criticisms of Torrance's ethics—with which these other more technical criticisms are associated, but by which they are not exhausted—are mistaken. See Todd H. Speidell, "The Soteriological Suspension of the Ethical in the Theology of T. F. Torrance," *Participatio* 5 (2015): 56–90.

89 *CD* 4.1, 128; *KD* 4.1, 140. Virtually the same claim occurs earlier in Barth's work: "Jesus does not merely have a history but is Himself this history." *CD* 3.2, 60; *KD* 3.2, 69. It is necessary to make four notes concerning the importance that the concept of "event" (*Ereignis*) holds for Barth's thought.

First, the concept of "event" is central to the whole of Barth's theology, harkening back at least as far as the dialectics and emphasis on *Krisis* found in Barth's commentaries on Romans. For instance, David Congdon argues—building on the work of Michael Beintker and Bruce McCormack—that the heart of the second edition of Barth's *Römberbrief* is an account of salvation "as an eschatological event." Congdon, *Mission of Demythologizing*, 280. Torrance's discussion of Barth's early theology admits the importance of its event-character. See, for instance, Torrance, *Karl Barth*, 98–99. But Torrance's understanding of Barth's development aligns with that of Hans Urs von Balthasar in thinking that Barth moves from an early dialectical stage to a later analogical stage (p. 142). Consequently, Torrance holds that the event-character of Barth's early theology is the result of an improper existentialism (p. 144). It thus becomes easy for Torrance to disregard the persisting importance of "event" in Barth's theology as a form of vestigial dualism. Bruce McCormack's work has demonstrated that this

Here is the historicizing of essences: Barth equates Jesus' being as the incarnate

account of Barth's development is incorrect. See Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909-1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

Second, dialectical theology is essentially a missionary theology and one that undertakes to theorize mission in opposition to Christendom. Barth's use of "event" language, early and late, functions in this context to destabilize the attempt to unite Christian mission and colonialism, which results in the loss of the gospel through its perversion into an imperialist ideology. See David W. Congdon, "Dialectical Theology as Theology of Mission: Investigating the Origins of Karl Barth's Break with Liberalism," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16, no. 4 (2014). This is important because Torrance, born in China as the son of missionaries, seems to have been tone-deaf to this crucial aspect of dialectical theology. In a letter to his sister from 1937 that is held in The Thomas F. Torrance Manuscript Collection at Princeton Seminary and quoted by Habets, Torrance wrote: "I have been reading a lot of Barth this summer, and I have been growing rather critical of some things—he lacks the missionary note and the evangelistic note rather sadly." Habets, *Theology in Transposition*, 12. Proper interpretation of this comment would require ascertaining which of Barth's writings Torrance was reading at the time, but this does reveal a certain distance in Torrance from perceiving the missiological crucible that produced Barth's theology in particular and dialectical theology as a whole. This is further demonstrated by Torrance's discussion of Barth's dialectical theology. Torrance does not thematize the missionary connection and treats dialectical theology primarily as an ontological and epistemological consideration, noting its opposition to "the assimilation of Christianity to the prevailing culture of Europe." Torrance, *Karl Barth*, 58; see 48–95. This is not incorrect, but neither is it complete. Torrance discusses how the reformational dynamics of sin and grace translate in Barth's theological epistemology, but he does not value the eschatological soteriology at dialectical theology's core (*pace* the first point above) that underwrites the epistemological and ontological dimensions he prioritizes. And because he treats those secondary aspects as primary and detachable from that eschatological soteriology, he does not clearly perceive dialectical theology's missionary character.

Third, the event-character of Barth's thought is a consequence of his influence by Martin Luther. As Congdon makes clear, Martin Luther and the early 20th-century German Luther renaissance were formative influences on the early development of Barth's dialectical theology and his break with liberalism. Congdon, *Mission of Demythologizing*, 262–72. George Hunsinger also highlights Luther's influence on the event-character of Barth's thought. Barth learned from Luther's articulation of justification as "a continuing event . . . that occurred in our lives once and for all through faith, and then on that basis continued to occur throughout our lives again and again." George Hunsinger, "What Karl Barth Learned from Martin Luther," in *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2000), 297.

Fourth, a full account of Barth's doctrine of baptism, and of his account of the relation between divine and human action, must include a discussion of his similarly important concept of "correspondence" (*Entsprechung*). This is especially necessary when dealing with the ethical dimension of Barth's thought in general and his doctrine of baptism in particular. However, the present essay lacks the scope to supply such a discussion. See McMaken, *Sign of the Gospel*, 186–92; Paul T. Nimmo, *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth's Ethical Vision* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 111–15; Kimlyn J. Bender, *Karl Barth's Christological Ecclesiology*, paperback ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 138–40.

Son of God with the history that he enacts. This is the natural consequence of Barth's rejection of the concepts of divine and human nature, with reference both to divine and to human being.[90] Consequently, it is not that Barth incorporates a concern for relations into his thinking about essences as does Torrance. Rather, Barth historicizes essences by refusing to attribute any content to notions of divinity or humanity except by way of Jesus' history. In order to talk about a union between God and humanity in Jesus, one must describe the history—the series of events—in which this union or "common actualization"[91] occurred.

Recognizing that Barth historicizes essences in his actualism decisively subverts the categories by which Torrance interprets and criticizes Barth's doctrine of baptism. Recall Torrance's concern that salvation be understood in terms of internal rather than external relations, which he articulated through deep engagement with Barth. The distinction that he drew there was between internal relations that are ontological and external relations that are "merely" moral.[92] This distinction makes sense on more traditional ontological grounds, which is why it has such sweeping explanatory power in Torrance's hands. There it stands as a bulwark against a dualism that would separate the ontological from the existential, the realm of being from the realm of history and action. But one important consequence of Barth's historicization of essences is that *what were external, moral relations become internal, ontological ones*. There is no hidden ontological reality behind our existential actuality, no being behind our history and actions. There is no internal, ontological relation to be had with God that is not enacted historically or, as Torrance would say, that is not an

90 See *CD* 4.2, 26–27; *KD* 4.2, 26–28. On Barth's rejection of "nature" language in this regard, see Paul Dafydd Jones, *The Humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 31–34.

91 Darren O. Sumner, "Common Actualization: Karl Barth's Recovery and Reappropriation of the Communication of Natures," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 53, no. 4 (2011). Hunsinger notes that Barth "actualized the traditional conception of the incarnation." George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2000), 140. Congdon explains that "Barth reinterprets metaphysical concepts in a historical way." Congdon, *Mission of Demythologizing*, 369. See also Bruce L. McCormack, "Karl Barth's Historicized Christology: Just How 'Chalcedonian' Is It?," in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008). For my judgment regarding the relation of Barth's thought to the Chalcedonian Definition, see McMaken, "Definitive, Defective or Deft," 98–102. It is worth noting that it is possible to affirm Barth's historicization of God's essence without involving God in any untoward dependency on creaturely reality. One might, for instance, speak of eternity as "the positive mode of time unique to the Trinity," and thus of the Trinity as possessing its own eternal historicity. Hunsinger, "*Mysterium Trinitatis*," 199.

92 Torrance, "Karl Barth and the Latin Heresy," 464.

external, moral relation.[93] Consequently, Torrance's criticism of Barth's doctrine of baptism cannot be understood as a criticism internal to Barth's theology. For Barth, water and Spirit baptism relate according to the logic of paradoxical identity, which describes the relation between divine and human action in the event of their simultaneity. It is impossible to conceive a closer relation between God and humanity on the grounds of Barth's actualism than such an event of simultaneity, in which faith perceives and confesses that divine action occurs precisely *as* human action.[94]

93 This aspect of Barth's thought was perhaps decisively influenced by his study of Ulrich Zwingli in the 1920s. As Keith Johnson explains, Barth found in Zwingli a mode of thought that "made human action a constitutive element of the relationship between God and the human while also maintaining the proper distinction between God and the creature." Keith L. Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 54. This gains significance when one remembers that Barth, albeit somewhat playfully, described his mature doctrine of baptism as "Neo-Zwinglian." *CD* 4.4, 130; *KD* 4.4, 142. See Akira Demura, "Zwingli in the Writings of Karl Barth - with Special Emphasis on the Doctrine of the Sacraments," in *Probing the Reformed Tradition: Historical Studies in Honor of Edward A. Dowey, Jr.*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian G. Armstrong (Louisville, KY: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1989).

94 I owe thanks to David W. Congdon and Myk Habets, who read and provided valuable feedback on earlier versions of the essay. One such version of this essay was presented to the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship at their annual meeting in conjunction with the annual national meeting of the American Academy of Religion, on November 20th, 2015. I wish to thank the Fellowship's president, Gary Deddo, and the other members of the Executive Committee for inviting me to address them. Discussion following the presentation was quite stimulating and I benefited especially from comments offered by Kimlyn Bender and George Hunsinger.

THE MOTIF OF *KOINŌNIA* IN T. F. TORRANCE'S ECCLESIOLOGY

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Abstract: *In this article, we explore the dialogue between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Church as exemplified in the work of Thomas F. Torrance. The article begins with a concise introduction to the contours of Torrance's trinitarian theology, focusing on the terms ousia, hypostasis, and perichoresis. It unfolds the correlation between Torrance's view of God's being and the nature of the Church by evaluating two different ways in which Torrance uses the motif of koinōnia to develop the relationship between the triune communion and its human parallel. The article concludes with some observations about how Torrance's use of koinōnia shapes his view of structure and order in the life of the Church.*

Introduction

There were a number of factors which contributed to ecclesiology becoming a key topic of theological dialogue in the twentieth century. In particular, the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference heralded the rise of the ecumenical movement, which was paralleled by a significant resurgence in commitment to foreign missions. Although war delayed its formation, the World Council of Churches was officially inaugurated in 1948 and throughout the post-conflict years, advocates of ecumenism continued to work for interdenominational unity. It was in this context that Thomas F. Torrance published many of his ecclesiologically-oriented works. However, somewhat surprisingly for such a prodigious theologian, it is only in the last few years that researchers have widely begun to engage with Torrance's ecclesiology and to develop its potential for the Church in the twenty-first century.

Our goal in this article is to contribute to this discussion by exploring the dialogue between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Church as exemplified in the work of Thomas F. Torrance. We will begin with a closer look

at Torrance's doctrine of the Trinity, which will enable us to better describe the various models centred around the concept of *koinōnia* which Torrance uses in order to highlight the correlation between the triune communion and the created communion of the Church. The article will conclude by offering some reflections on the pragmatic significance of this approach to ecclesiology, including how Torrance's use of *koinōnia* offers a response to the fragmented state of the body of Christ, and an evaluation of whether we should classify Torrance's approach as a communion ecclesiology.

A brief methodological aspect should be mentioned at the start. One of Torrance's favourite phrases was to speak about a given object's "inner logic." Walker helpfully clarifies what Torrance means by this. Inner logic is

> a concept which is central to Torrance's theology and which he uses at key points to denote the essential structure and inherent significance of something. The word 'inner' refers to its intrinsic nature, underlying fundamental pattern, and the precise relations embedded within and constitutive of it, while 'logic' refers to its meaning and significance, the rationale and intelligibility inherent in it and its internal structural relations.[1]

Although Torrance frequently refers to the inner logic of the incarnation, or the inner logic of Scripture, he does not explicitly use the phrase, "the inner logic of the Trinity;" however this concept can be profitably applied to his work, for although Torrance recognises that the doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly mentioned or systematically laid out in Scripture, he is still emphatic that the Bible witnesses quite directly to the fact that God is a Trinity.[2] This concept of inner logic will act as a subtle guide to our ecclesiological explorations, for although Torrance never directly made the claim, it is consistent with his use of the concept to suggest that the doctrine of the Trinity forms the inner logic of the doctrine of the Church.

Consequently the starting place for an investigation of Torrance's ecclesiology—in fact, for his approach to the whole theological task—is found at the beginning of *The Christian Doctrine of God* with the affirmation that the doctrine of the Trinity is the "most profound article of the Christian Faith,"[3] and can only be "understood from within the unique, definitive and final self-revelation of God in

1 Robert T. Walker, "Incarnation and Atonement: Their Relation and Inter-Relation In the Theology of T. F. Torrance," *Participatio* 3 (2012): 5.

2 See Torrance's chapter "The Biblical Frame" in Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1996), 32–72.

3 Ibid., ix.

Jesus Christ his only begotten Son."[4] This lends credibility to Walker's observation that Torrance's work does not coalesce on the basis of logic or rational doctrinal development, but rather "in the object to which his theology points, the incarnate Christ in the heart of the Trinity."[5] This christocentric and trinitarian starting point forms the basis of how Torrance chooses to answer the question, "What is the Church?" Even though the Church has an empirical and visible existence, its historical actuality is subordinate to its derivation from the divine being of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For Torrance, reflecting upon the nature of the Church without considering it in its full theological relation to the doctrine of God would result in a truncated ecclesiology. A merely sociological approach to ecclesiology fails to appreciate the grand scope of God's redemptive plans, and undercuts itself by being unable to respect the role which the Church is given to play in the journey of the cosmos towards redemption. This is why he has a theological approach to ecclesiology, beginning with the doctrine of God, an ecclesiology from above, rather than an ecclesiology from below. It is to his doctrine of God that we now turn.

Towards a Trinitarian Ecclesiology

We have established that Torrance is convinced that the doctrine of the Trinity "expresses the essential and distinctively Christian understanding of God by which we live, and which is of crucial significance for the evangelical mission of the Church as well."[6] We now turn our attention to how Torrance applies this to developing his ecclesiological content. As we progress, a clarificatory comment on Torrance's interaction with the term *koinōnia* will be useful, as this is the prevalent motif which Torrance utilises in relating the Church to the Trinity. *Koinōnia* can be translated in several different ways; indeed, Torrance uses "fellowship", "communion" and "participation" interchangeably. However, he appreciates the Orthodox perspective that "fellowship" is a superficial translation of *koinōnia,* and tends to observe their preference to talk of the Triune "communion."[7] We will follow his lead on this.

Torrance rejects any approach to ecclesiology which is based upon order,

4 Ibid., 1.

5 Robert T. Walker, "Introduction," in Thomas F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), xxx.

6 Ibid., 10.

7 Thomas F. Torrance, "Trinity Sunday Sermon on Acts 2:41–47," *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 52 (1970): 194.

ministry, practices, or varying doctrinal formulations—in short, on anything temporal—feeling that these foundations are theologically inadequate. The primary basis on which an understanding of the Church is to be sought is not in the Church as an institution, but in God's triune being. More simply stated, Torrance holds that "the Church is the work of the three divine persons,"[8] and is adamant that this trinitarian approach is faithful to the New Testament, to the apostolic tradition, and to the Fathers' teaching.

Torrance's primary contention is that because God is essentially a "Communion of Love," then God "not only creates personal reciprocity between us and himself but creates a community of personal reciprocity in love, which is what we speak of as the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ living in the Communion of the Spirit and incorporated into Christ as his Body."[9] Torrance develops his theological account of the relationship between the Trinity and the Church in such a way as to emphasise that the Church is a community created and sustained by God, correlative to the communion that God enjoys in the fullness of his triune being. Because the Church's being is ontologically derived from the divine being, the relationship between the Triune God and the Church is more than a "relation of likeness." This relationship cannot be reduced to the suggestion that the relations between humans in the Church mirror those of the Triune God—although this is true in a simplistic sense. Torrance instead prefers the concept of participation. It is through an actual relation to Christ on the basis of the incarnation that humanity is able to participate through the Holy Spirit in the union and communion of the Holy Trinity.[10]

It is necessary to qualify the relationship between the Church and the Trinity and to differentiate it from the eternal, internal relationships of the Holy Trinity, with the recognition that God's being is not constituted by his relationship to others, for the free outflow of God's love towards us is determined by God's being *ad intra.*[11] "We must think of his Being for others as grounded in the transcendent freedom of his own Being."[12] As Torrance explains further,

> The real meaning of the Being or I am of God becomes clear in the two-way fellowship he freely establishes with his people as their Lord and Saviour, for it

8 Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 360.

9 Ibid., 6.

10 For more on this actual relationship, see Torrance's comments in Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 40–41, 67–70.

11 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 132.

12 Ibid., 131.

> has to do with the saving will or self-determination of God in his love and grace to be with them as their God as well as his determination of them to be with him as his redeemed children. The Being of God is to be understood, therefore, as living and dynamic Being, fellowship-creating or communion-constituting Being, but if it is communion-constituting Being toward us it is surely to be understood also as ever-living, ever-dynamic Communion (*koinonia*) in the Godhead. By his very Nature he is a Communion in himself, which is the ground in the Being of God for his communion with his people.[13]

God only acts to establish communion with humans because this is unchangingly who God is in God's own eternal life. God's love is "not that of solitary inactive or static love, whatever that may be, but the active movement of reciprocal loving within the Being of God which is the one ultimate Source of all love . . . he is the eternally loving One in himself who loves through himself."[14] The Church reposes upon God's eternal purpose in creating humanity to share in his own life and love, which is grounded in God's *ousia* as "being for others," for "if he were not Love in his innermost Being, his love toward us in Christ and the Holy Spirit would be ontologically groundless."[15] However, since God is not dependent upon, nor is his essential nature changed, by his relationship with humanity, his choice to be the God who creates and loves is "sheer gratuitous grace . . . the transcendent freedom of his self-determination in love for us."[16] This makes it all the more startling that God was not *required* to create, but still freely *chose* to create. Our response to this can only be one of awe, thanksgiving, and worship. As Torrance summarises,

> Since God the Father has communicated himself to us through the saving economy of his Son, the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ, it is the incarnate Son who naturally constitutes the real focus for the doctrine of the Trinity, and the regulative centre with reference to which all the worship, faith and mission of the Church take their shape: from the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, and to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. It is correspondingly the New Testament teaching about the Church as the Body of Christ incarnate, crucified and risen, that provides the immediate focus and controlling centre of reference for a doctrine of the Church founded and rooted in the self-communication of the Holy Trinity. It was a Christocentric doctrine of the Church along these lines, reached under the constraint of God's revealed nature as the consubstantial communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one indivisible Trinity, that was brought to fruition in the mind of the Church through the work of the great Greek

13 Ibid., 124.

14 Ibid., 5.

15 Ibid., 4.

16 Ibid.

theologians of the fourth century, but as a by-product of their determination to preserve the evangelical substance of the faith.[17]

Torrance's Doctrine of the Holy Trinity

In Torrance's work a complex synthesis of sources takes shape. He integrates material from theologians like Athanasius, Calvin, and Barth—alongside many others—who each played a significant role in their own historical period of theological and cultural transition. He pays particular attention, however, to the Fathers and the work they did in formulating the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.[18] Torrance's retelling of the development of Patristic theology makes it clear that by the time that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed had been revised and ratified in 381 AD, the doctrine of the Trinity had become something of immense, definitive, and irreversible significance for the Church.[19]

Knowledge of the Triune God was an essential foundation of Christian doctrine, since the "pattern and order of God's Triune Life" imposed itself upon the early leaders of the Church.[20] Torrance highlights that we must not only pay attention to what the Fathers left in written credal form, but also on what they did *not* say. Their emphasis on both *eusebeia* (piety) and *thesebeia* (godliness) created a deep sense of reverence towards the transcendent nature of God, which meant that there had to be appropriate boundaries maintained in all inquiries into the mystery of the Trinity.[21] Torrance retains this reluctance to intrude into the mystery of God's being, but this certainly does not limit his verbosity; rather he makes much of the distinction between the self-revelation of God and what we may say in response to that revelation.[22] He frequently employs the Athanasian aphorism, "Thus far human knowledge goes. Here the

17 Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 263.

18 Readers familiar with T. F. Torrance's corpus will no doubt be aware of Torrance's work *The Trinitarian Faith* in which he attempts to set forth the doctrine of the Trinity by allowing the Fathers to speak for themselves. There is some debate about how objective his reading of the Fathers actually is – see Jason Robert Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers: A Reformed, Evangelical, and Ecumenical Reconstruction of the Patristic Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

19 Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* ix.

20 Ibid.

21 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith,* 17.

22 Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 281.

cherubim spread the covering of their wings."[23]

The centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity for Torrance's ecclesiology therefore makes sense. Torrance describes the Holy Trinity as "the innermost heart of Christian faith and worship, the central dogma of classical theology, the fundamental grammar of our knowledge of God."[24] The term "trinitarian" is consequently an absolute descriptor for Torrance's knowledge of God, for

> If God is triune in his nature, then to really know God means that we must know him in accordance with his triune nature from the start . . . that means we must know him as the Triune God who within himself has relations between Father, Son and Holy Spirit; so that for us to know that God, we must know him in a mode of understanding on our part appropriate to the Trinity of Persons in God. There must be a 'trinitarian' character in our knowing of God, corresponding to the trinity of relations in God himself.[25]

Having established the centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity for Torrance, we turn now to discuss how Torrance constructs his doctrine of the Trinity. We will build this around three key theological terms—*ousia, hypostasis,* and *perichoresis*—and the key Torrancian concept of "onto-relations."

Ousia and *hypostasis* were used as cognate terms in the original text of the Nicene Creed, where they both referred to "being." Initially, theologians such as Athanasius preferred to allow the meanings of these terms to remain fluid, until it became clear that this could lead to theological confusion and inadvertent heresy.[26] The theological connotations of these terms were then more precisely defined, so that *ousia* came to refer to being in relation to its internal reality, and so had a primarily inward reference, while *hypostasis* came to refer to the outward reference of being, and was used to describe the three divine persons who only exist in relation to each other.[27] In more common terms, *ousia* denotes the one being or nature of God, while *hypostasis* came to signify the three distinct persons. However, while *ousia* has to do with God's "internal relations," and *hypostasis* is "being as otherness," both *ousia* and *hypostasis* have to do with the Triune God and are thus theologically inseparable terms.[28]

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23 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God,* 81, 151, 193.

24 Ibid., 2.

25 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980), 148.

26 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 128–29. Torrance identifies the "twin errors of tritheism and modalism" as the danger here.

27 Ibid., 128–33.

28 Ibid., 131.

Torrance never considers the one *ousia* (being) of God apart from the three *hypostases* (persons), or the three persons apart from the one being. He prefers not to use the language of "whole" and "part" when writing about the Trinity, because Father, Son, and Spirit are each wholly God; we cannot think of God's being as an undifferentiated wholeness. We can only think of three-in-one, a fullness of personal being.[29] Since they share the same *ousia,* each triune person is simultaneously whole, and part of a whole. This is an example of where Torrance acknowledges the limitations of human language, and the way in which it is incapable of describing divine realities.

Perichoresis is the third term that we must turn our attention to, which has to do with the coinherence of the three triune persons, or their "mutual indwelling."[30] *Perichoresis* refers to the way in which the triune persons contain each other without commingling. The key point is that they dwell *in* and *with* each other.[31] As Torrance explains, "the three divine Persons mutually dwell in one another and coinhere or inexist in one another while nevertheless remaining other than one another and distinct from one another."[32] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remain distinct *hypostases,* and yet share completely in the same *ousia. Perichoresis* affirms the unity and Triunity of God, and that there is only ever one divine activity, "that of God the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit." [33]

The key concept which Torrance uses to hold these three terms together—*ousia, hypostasis,* and *perichoresis*—is the idea of the ontological relations which are intrinsic to the divine life. Referring to these as "onto-relations," Torrance observes that the three divine persons are what they are only in relation to each other—they are persons-in-relation, for "the relations between the divine Persons belong to what they are as Persons—they are constitutive onto-relations."[34] Since we never know one person in abstraction from the other persons, all three are

29 Ibid., 24, 28.

30 Ibid., 168–70. Athanasius provided the basis for the doctrine of coinherence (without providing the specific vocabulary) which was not merely a linking of the distinctive properties of the Father, Son, and Spirit, but a fully mutual indwelling. Hilary of Poitier—who is a Western scholar but draws from Eastern theology due to his exposure to the Eastern Fathers during his exile—develops this further by stating that the three divine Persons are uniquely able to mutually contain each other. We cannot think of this in the sense of physical objects and their ability to contain each other. See also Thomas F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 32–33.

31 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 172.

32 Ibid., 102.

33 Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 234.

34 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God,* 157.

worshipped as a "circle of reciprocal relations."[35] Thus, as Torrance observes, whenever we speak about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we are not simply using metaphors or images to describe God. These are more than

> modes, aspects, faces, names or relations in God's manifestation of himself to us, for they are inseparable from the hypostatic Realities of which they are the distinctive self-presentations of divine Being—the three divine Hypostases or Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit who in their differentiation from one another and in their communion with one another are the one eternal God.[36]

This point about the communion which the triune persons have with each other is vital for understanding Torrance's trinitarian perspective. Through giving definition to his use of *ousia, hypostasis*, and *perichoresis,* and noting the concept of onto-relations, we come to understand that the triune life is a life of communion, leading to the assertion that for the Triune God, "Being and Communion are one and the same."[37] We may not think of God's being in static terms, as the Hellenistic philosophical tradition does with its abstract definitions of being as essence or substance. Instead, we are to think of the *movement* of God's life, as moving in the *direction* of the redemption of humankind.[38] This is not a first-order movement in and of itself, but is rather the overflow of God's own inner life, the relations which eternally and unchangingly exist between the three Triune persons. God's life has its own time—an eternal time which is different to created time in that it lacks the distinction of past, present, and future, but a time which nonetheless has movement and constancy, which is what Torrance describes as its direction. Thus, while God does not change, remaining "who he is in the undeviating self-determination of his own Life and Activity,"[39] God is nonetheless redemptively at work within space and time, bringing creation towards the *eschaton.* Events like the incarnation and Pentecost demonstrate "the movement and activity of God towards the fulfilment of his eternal purpose of love."[40] The steadfastness of God as the one who actively creates and redeems is fostered as a key tenet in Torrance's trinitarian ecclesiology.

Complementary Ecclesiological Models: *Koinōnia*

35 Ibid., 174.

36 Ibid., 92.

37 Ibid., 104.

38 Ibid., 241.

39 Ibid., 235.

40 Ibid., 242.

Koinōnia, along with *mystērion* and *prothesis,* are three Scriptural terms which Torrance selects to show how Christ's incarnation, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension all play a role in fulfilling God's eternal purpose.[41] Each of these three terms has a primary and a secondary usage. *Mystērion* refers primarily to the union of God and humanity in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and secondarily to the union of Christ and his Church through the Spirit. Torrance attributes *mystērion* primarily to the work of the Son.[42] This mystery is part of the veiling and unveiling of God's eternal purpose, his *prothesis*. The primary sense of *prothesis* is the eternal, redemptive plan of God which is set forth in Jesus Christ, and then reaches out to its fulfilment and consummation in the Church. The secondary sense of *prothesis* is the way that the Church sets forth, or proclaims, the mystery of the Gospel particularly through Word and Sacrament.[43] Torrance attributes *prosthesis* primarily to the work of the Father. Finally, *koinōnia* has the primary sense of humanity's participation in the Trinity through Jesus Christ's completed work of atonement, and the secondary sense of the fellowship or communion which exists between members of Christ's body, and is attributed primarily to the work of the Holy Spirit. Together, these three terms summarise the teaching of Ephesians 1 and 2 where Paul explains that through Christ and in the Spirit we have access to the Father.[44]

Torrance describes *koinōnia* as both a matter of knowledge and of being. It is a matter of knowledge, because no one knows the Father except through the revelation of the Son. Humanity's participation in the *koinōnia* of the Trinity is how they receive knowledge of the oneness of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.[45] It is also a matter of being, because the oneness of God and humanity in Christ is inserted right into humanity's sinful existence, and "that insertion of oneness by atonement results in *koinōnia* . . . [*koinōnia*] is thus created by the atonement and resurrection of Christ."[46] This is in keeping with Torrance's premise that epistemology follows ontology; true knowledge of *koinōnia* only follows from participating in *koinōnia.*

There are two different but complementary ways in which Torrance uses *koinōnia.* He writes about a "threefold communion," and also about the "two

41 Torrance, *Incarnation*, 161–62.

42 Ibid., 174. Torrance insists that we must be cautious around this attribution of terms to distinct persons, because we may not suggest that the triune persons work in isolation from each other.

43 Ibid., 168–70.

44 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 2.

45 Torrance, *Incarnation*, 172.

46 Ibid., 173.

dimensions of *koinōnia."* These parallel models must both be unfolded to aid in understanding Torrance's trinitarian ecclesiology. The former is the more foundational model—threefold communion is the primary structural undergirding of Torrance's ecclesiology, and it displays how Torrance maps out the mediatorial role of Christ in forming the connection between the Triune God and the Church and in bringing the Church into existence as a community within space and time. However, Torrance's use of this threefold model is supplemented by explaining the two complementary dimensions of *koinōnia*. These are the vertical dimension of humanity's relation to God, and the horizontal dimension of humanity's relation to each other. We will explore these two models in turn.

The Threefold Communion

Torrance explains the concept of a threefold communion by beginning with a description of the consubstantial communion or *koinōnia* of God *in se,* Father, Son, and Spirit, who are an eternal *perichoretic* communion of love. This was what we discussed in the first section of this article. Next, Torrance discusses how the eternal love of the Godhead—the love which *is* the Triune Godhead—overflows and is embodied in humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. This takes place through the hypostatic union, for in Jesus Christ, divine and human nature are united and brought into *koinōnia* throughout his whole atoning work, in his life, death, and resurrection. Christ has healed our sinful humanity, and made it possible for humans to participate in the communion of the Holy Spirit with the sanctified human nature of Jesus. Finally, Torrance emphasises that on the basis of Christ's atoning reconciliation, the same Holy Spirit who is the bond of love within the Trinity, pours out the love of God within the Church, so that through the communion (*koinōnia*) of the Spirit, the Church is made able to participate in the eternal love of God. The Church is formed as a community of love on earth as it participates through Christ and the Spirit in the communion of the Trinity.[47] Jesus Christ "identified Himself with us, made Himself one with us, and on that ground claims us as His own, lays hold of us, and assumes us into union and communion with Him, so that as Church we find our essential being and life not in ourselves but in Him alone."[48] We must keep in mind here our earlier material

47 Torrance, *Atonement*, 360. A more imaginative analogy of the threefold communion model is offered by Kye Won Lee, who likens Torrance to Ben Hur, as the champion of the Trinity, with *perichoresis,* the hypostatic union, and *koinōnia* as the three wheels of his chariot—see Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 317.

48 Thomas F. Torrance, "What Is the Church," *Ecumenical Review* 11, no. 1 (Oct 1958): 9.

on God's being as communion.

The basis for this threefold model is that through Christ's incarnational atonement, believers are united to God, so that they "organically cohere with and in him as one Body in one Spirit."[49] Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human; in him the eternal relations of the Triune Godhead assume an economic form and yet remain immanent, "thus opening out history to the transcendence of God while actualising the self-giving of God within it."[50] In a corresponding way, through the Spirit God unites us to Christ, "in such a way that his human agency in vicarious response to the Father overlaps with our response, gathers it up in its embrace, sanctifying, affirming and upholding it in himself, so that it is established in spite of all our frailty as our free and faithful response to the Father in him."[51] Our reading of Torrance here is supported by Hunsinger, who acknowledges that for Torrance, Christ's vicarious humanity is the point of contact between the Trinity and humanity, for "we share in the communion of the Trinity as we are joined to the person of the incarnate Son by virtue of our participation in his vicarious humanity."[52] The key thing to note here is that humankind do not respond to God independently; we require a divine work of grace to enable us to acknowledge his Lordship.

We can think out this threefold model more fully by focusing on how Torrance describes the communion of the Trinity as flowing into and shaping our human life—again, filling out our earlier material. The relationship that exists between Father, Son and Holy Spirit is intrinsic to their *ousia*, but has become embodied in our humanity through the incarnation and the uniting of divine and human nature through the hypostatic union. As we have noted, *koinōnia* is a matter of both knowledge and being. Through Jesus' assumption of human nature, God "has once and for all assumed human nature into that mutuality and opened his divine being for human participation."[53] It is through the life of the incarnate Son that the Holy Spirit has "accustomed himself" to dwell with humanity, and "adapted human nature to receive him and be possessed by him."[54] The incarnate Son accomplishes atoning reconciliation in his own person, and this is actualized

49 Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 254.

50 Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 101.

51 Ibid., 103.

52 George Hunsinger, "The Dimension of Depth: Thomas F. Torrance on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 2 (May 2001): 166.

53 Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, 101.

54 Ibid., 102.

in individuals through the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the redemptive work of the Trinity, humans are transformed by a divine work of sheer grace, no longer separated from God by the consequences of sin.

Nevertheless, it is not simply that all humanity is part of the Church, even though Christ has assumed the humanity of all rather than the humanity of some. It is obvious that Torrance cannot be described as a universalist,[55] for he notes that "whether a man believes or not, the creative Word continues activity . . . some eat and drink salvation; others out of the same cup and the same plate eat and drink damnation."[56] While the Church is comprised of those who have been baptised in the name of the Trinity, there is also the expectation that members will bear witness to their union with Christ as they "live in faith and obedience to him."[57]

Torrance describes the Church as the "universal family of God" adopted as God's children, the "community of the reconciled" who are united to Christ and through him find redemption, and the "communion of the saints" who are filled with the Spirit in such a way that they may be sent out in power "to live out the divine life and love among humankind as the bodily instrument and image of Christ in the world and the one comprehensive communion of the Spirit."[58] These phrases all denote a visible aspect to membership in the body of Christ, which is outworked through participation in the life of the Church, in worship, baptism, and the eucharist.

The Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Koinōnia

While the threefold communion model explicitly incorporates both trinitarian and christological foci and helps us to shape our thinking about the unequivocal way in which Torrance sees the doctrine of the Triune God as shaping the doctrine of the Church, we must remain careful not to confuse the *koinōnia* of the Church, as that which is formed between humans through the work of the Spirit, with the *koinōnia* of the Triune God *in se*. These are distinctly different. Our ability to maintain this essential distinction will be strengthened by examining

55 Torrance addresses the issue of universalism in Thomas F. Torrance, "Universalism or Election?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 2, no. 3 (1949): 310–18.

56 Thomas F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church: The Ministry and Sacraments of the Gospel* vol. 2, 2 vols. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 72-73.

57 Torrance, *Atonement*, 362.

58 Ibid. To "live out the divine life" is a reference to the Church's role of bearing witness, and proclaiming the Gospel. It is not to suggest any synthesis of divine and human agency.

the other model of *koinōnia* which Torrance uses – the two dimensions of *koinōnia*. The vertical dimension is another name for the threefold communion model that we have just explored; through union with Christ, humans are able to participate as the church in the triune *koinōnia* through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The important counterpart to the vertical dimension, which is as yet unexplored, is the horizontal dimension, the communion formed among humanity. As God communicates himself to humanity in a movement of love which is received in the Spirit, this generates a reciprocal community of love, the Church.[59]

The personalising incorporating activity of the Spirit creates, not only reciprocity between Christ and ourselves, but a community of reciprocity among humankind, which through the Spirit is rooted in and reflects the Trinitarian relations in God himself. It is thus that the Church comes into being and is constantly maintained in its union with Christ as his Body. This is the Church of the triune God, embodying under the power of the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, the divine *koinonia* within the conditions of human and temporal existence.[60]

These two dimensions are inseparable from each other. The horizontal derives from the vertical, but at the same time, the horizontal bears witness to the nature of the vertical relationship between God and humanity.

It is only through vertical participation in Christ that the Church is horizontally a communion of love, a fellowship of reconciliation, a community of the redeemed. Both these belong together in the fullness of Christ. It is only as we share in Christ Himself that we share in the life of the Church, but it is only as we share with all saints in their relation to Christ that we participate deeply in the love and knowledge of God.[61]

Jesus Christ is the true nexus of the vertical and horizontal dimensions, for he became physically present within space and time without distorting his relationship to the Father and the Spirit.[62] While the Church exists in space and time, it has its ultimate being in the Triune God, and so also exists—in a way appropriate to its creaturely status—at the intersection of the vertical dimension and the horizontal dimension.

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59 Thomas F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 178–85.

60 Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 251.

61 Torrance, "What Is the Church," Ecumenical Review 11, no. 1 (Oct 1958), 6-21.

62 Thomas F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation*, Logos Electronic Edition ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1997), 14.

In Dialogue with Communion Ecclesiologies

The final task that remains for us is to briefly bring Torrance's ecclesiology into dialogue with the wider field of communion ecclesiologies, and to examine what particular contribution his use of the *koinōnia* motif offers to the Church today. This is particularly relevant given the way that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity became a central theme of theological reflection in the twentieth century, leading, as Ralph Del Colle observes, to the "near consensus that the nature of church life and order is a matter of *communio* or *koinonia*."[63] However, despite a renewed appreciation for the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Church that emerged, the definition of a communion ecclesiology is far from a precise science.

Rather than seeking a strict definition, communion ecclesiologies might be better described as a generously-defined theological family. On one hand, we have definitions such as those offered by Roman Catholic theologian Dennis M. Doyle. Although Doyle's work focuses upon Roman Catholic communion ecclesiology, his definition is sufficiently broad to speak cross-denominationally. He appreciatively notes that communion ecclesiology

> represents an attempt to move beyond the merely juridical and institutional understandings by emphasising the mystical, sacramental, and historical dimensions of the Church. It focuses on relationships, whether among the persons of the Trinity, among human beings and God, among the members of the Communion of Saints, among members of a parish, or among the bishops dispersed throughout the world.[64]

Offering a similar but rather more critical definition, Protestant theologian Nicholas Healy notes that there are at least four different types of communion ecclesiologies, each with its own suggestions about the kind of reform which is needed in the contemporary Church,[65] and at least six different ways of developing a communion ecclesiology.[66] Healy's definition is simpler overall than

63 Ralph Del Colle, "The Church," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, eds. Kathryn Tanner, John Webster, Iain Torrance (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 253.

64 Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 12. He notes particularly in regard to his own tradition that that "Catholic theologians cannot interpret either Vatican II or communion ecclesiology apart from each other." (2)

65 Nicholas M. Healy, "Communion Ecclesiology: A Cautionary Note," *Pro Ecclesia* 4, no. 4 (1995): 449–50.

66 Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical–Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6–8, 26–51.

Doyle's, suggesting that

> communion ecclesiologies relate the primary reality of the church to the Trinity as such. The true identity or reality of the church lies in its participation in the inner-trinitarian *koinonia* or communion. That is, this participatory relation is at the same time the mode of our salvation, which is therefore realized in an ecclesial and communal form.[67]

These citations from Doyle and Healy demonstrate their shared understanding; communion ecclesiologies are those which give pre-eminence to the trinitarian life of God, and seek to unfold its direct implications for the life and existence of the Church. This gives us a framework by which we may note the particular contribution which Torrance's approach to a communion ecclesiology makes to the life of the Church.

Although Torrance's emphasis that the renewed doctrine of the Church must have a christocentric and trinitarian basis as the basis for ecumenical development was not unique, bringing his work into the ongoing dialogue of communion ecclesiology is a profitable undertaking because it gives us a very specific perspective on the way that this core theological relationship developed. Every theologian is a product of many different influencing factors; examining a specific facet of their thought in the systematic way that we have done in this article enables us to understand both the individual's thought and the wider context of theological development in a more robust way.

It is at this point that we may reintroduce the concept of onto-relations into our consideration of the life of the Church. Torrance claims that the idea of onto-relations within the Trinity is what gave rise to the idea of person, which could also be "applicable to inter-human relations, but in a created way reflecting the uncreated way in which it applies to the Trinitarian relations in God."[68] Following this train of thought, Torrance further proposes that the concept of personhood, or of personal being, "actually arose only along with the doctrines of Christ and of the Holy Trinity,"[69] since we are "people who are personal primarily through onto-relations to him as the creative Source of our personal being, and secondarily through onto-relations to one another within the subject—subject structures of our creaturely being as they have come from him."[70] Torrance also relates this to Clerk Maxwell's scientific insistence that "the relations between things, whether so-called objects or events, belong

67 Healy, "Communion Ecclesiology: A Cautionary Note," 442.

68 Torrance, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 102.

69 Ibid., 119.

70 Ibid., 160.

to what things really are."[71] The alternative to an understanding of "person" shaped by the doctrine of the Trinity, is that which was "logically derived from the notions of individuality and rational substance and not derived ontologically from the Trinity."[72]

Although we may not directly apply the *perichoretic* onto-relations of the Trinity to humanity's relationships, the Christian concept of the person is shaped by this idea of relationships, so that to be a person is to be in relationship with others, to be in community.[73] The doctrine of the Holy Trinity shapes

> the distinctively Christian concept of the person, deriving from the community of love in God and defined in onto-relational terms in which the inveterate ego-centricity of the self-determining personality is overcome, which demands and gives shape to a new and open concept of human society.[74]

We may explore in a more extensive way this idea of a "new and open concept of human society" which is grounded in the community of love that is God himself by turning to a series of articles entitled the "Real Crises" that Torrance wrote at the start of the 1990s. Published in *Life and Work,* the monthly newsletter of the Church of Scotland, they are brief—no more than three pages in length—and aimed at a less academic audience. This should not be taken as suggesting that they are less than robustly theological, for they do a wonderful job of summarising the pragmatic thrust of Torrance's ecclesiology.

In the first article, entitled "The Kirk's Crisis of Faith," Torrance argues that the Church's obsession with cultural and societal relevance has resulted in the loss of the Church's distinctiveness, observing that "the more the distinctive doctrines of divine revelation are set aside in the obsession of the Church to be socially relevant, the more the Church disappears into secular society."[75] He continues the same thread in the second article, "The Crisis of Morality," noting that the separation of moral law from theological truth has resulted in a loss of morality based in the redemptive narrative, and based instead in the utilitarian ethic of human well-being. Because of this, the Church is no longer a transformative agent of culture and society, but has instead become enslaved to political ideals.[76] In these first two articles, Torrance draws primarily on the

71 Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 285.

72 Ibid.

73 Thomas F. Torrance, *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 50–51.

74 Ibid., 287.

75 Thomas F. Torrance, "The Kirk's Crisis of Faith," *Life and Work* (Oct 1990): 16.

76 Thomas F. Torrance, "The Crisis of Morality," *Life and Work* (Nov 1990): 14–15.

doctrine of the incarnation.

In the third article Torrance turns his attention to "The Crisis of Community." Drawing explicitly on the doctrine of the Trinity, Torrance contends that there is substantial divergence between a political society which relies upon legislative compulsion, and the Christian community which is formed through participating in the divine *koinōnia* of the Holy Trinity. In Torrance's opinion,

> Everything goes wrong whenever the Church relies upon secular power to order human life and legislate community into existence, for that would substitute social mechanisms for the unifying and transforming operation of divine love which alone can provide community with its inner cohesive force . . . we may be joined together as persons in community only on supernatural grounds . . . [that] is why any decentralising of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity in the life and faith of the Church leads to the crisis of community and the depersonalisation of society that we experience today.[77]

Elsewhere, Torrance also contrasts society and community, suggesting that the Church "is the medium by which society is transmuted into community. Indeed, the Church as such is precisely the new community in the heart of our human society."[78] As such, the Church must remain distinct—it is to be like salt, as a preserver, and like yeast, or any form of fermenter, bringing change. It is simultaneously the most radical and the most conservative force in society. When the Church disregards the status quo and the popular forms and fashions of the world, it will be able to truly live out its calling as a new community,[79] and society "may at last be transmuted into a community of love centring in and sustained by the personalising and humanising presence of the Mediator."[80] God's life is one of communion, the eternal perichoretic love which enfolds the triune persons; consequently it makes sense for the Church's life to be characterised by its reflection of the triune love. Torrance suggests that this divine love is "the very *esse* of the Church given to it through union with Christ," which "manifests itself in the Church in the form of self-denial, suffering and service."[81] In the Church, "everything must be subordinate to love, in which each serves the other and is subject to the other."[82]

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77 Thomas F. Torrance, "The Crisis of Community," *Life and Work* (Dec 1990): 17.

78 Thomas F. Torrance, "Answer to God," *Biblical Theology* 2, no. 1 (1951): 13.

79 Ibid., 14.

80 Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*, 72.

81 Ibid., 66.

82 Ibid., 67.

Concluding Reflections

Torrance's embrace of the concept of *koinōnia* as a central principle in his ecclesiology results in a vision of the Church which is grounded in the Triune God rather than in human society. The Church is a creaturely community, but one which is divinely formed, for it is only as humans participate in the communion of the Holy Trinity that they may simultaneously participate in a correlative community in space and time. We will conclude this presentation of this facet of Torrance's thought by reflecting on the anticipatory nature of the motif of *koinōnia.*

While the Church experiences the joy of already living in the new age that began with the resurrection, it must simultaneously embrace the challenge of that new age not yet being fully realized. The Church's existence as a community of love, reflecting the Triune *koinōnia,* will not be fully realised until the *eschaton.* Although the Church already exists in its vertical dimension and participates in the new creation as it shares in Christ's self-sanctification, it simultaneously exists in its horizontal dimension as a pilgrim people, composed of sinful men and women awaiting the day of their redemption, who are subject to the limitations and frustrations of fallen time.[83]

However, this is not to suggest that this time is a time without purpose. In the current period of history between the two advents of Christ—which Torrance names the "eschatological pause"[84]—the Holy Spirit is sent from the Father, through the Son, to sustain the Church.[85] It is only because God has already moved towards humanity in Jesus Christ, and is present with humanity through the Spirit, that the Church "becomes itself a communion of love through which the life of God flows out in love toward every human being."[86] This is the work of the Spirit in the time between, for it is only through the Spirit that humanity is able to participate in the *koinōnia* of divine love that is the triune being of God, and thus only through the Spirit that the Church may live out the love of God as a visible witness. Although the Church can only imperfectly and finitely embody the love of the God who calls it into being, as the body of Christ it is to live in such a way that everything it does, whether as individuals or corporately, eagerly anticipates Christ's second advent.

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83 Torrance, "What is the Church," 12.

84 Torrance, *Atonement,* 302–3.

85 T.F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 25.

86 Torrance, *Atonement*, 374–75.

THE BODY OF CHRIST ANALOGY IN T. F. TORRANCE'S ECUMENICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

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Abstract: *T. F. Torrance, in the midst of early modern ecumenical dialogue, presented an ecclesial ontology robustly informed and determined by Christological categories. This is nowhere more evident than in his interpretation of the biblical image of the church as the "body of Christ." In contrast to mystical interpretations of the image, Torrance argues that the "body of Christ" should be understood as an incarnational analogy. Christ's humanity, resurrected and ascended, is the "essence" of the church. The church becomes what it already is in Christ by conforming to the newness of his humanity. In this way, Torrance constructs a powerful Protestant and ecumenical account of the church's being-in-becoming. The uniqueness and ecumenical purchase of Torrance's proposal are here demonstrated.*

Prior to the 1950s, ecumenical dialogue on the doctrine of the church was largely constituted by exercises in comparative ecclesiology. Such discussions bore fruit. In the "rough and tumble of ecumenical encounter," many theologians and church leaders listened at length for the first time to perspectives from traditions different to their own. In 1948, William Manson recruited the young theologian T. F. Torrance "for the work of Inter-Church Relations," and involved him "both in the Presbyterian-Anglican conversations and in the Faith and Order discussions of the World Council of Churches." For Torrance, this was a life-changing experience. His encounter with other traditions impressed upon him the idea that he was "wearing powerful Presbyterian spectacles" which had distorted his reading of both Scripture and historic theological works.[1]

Despite such benefits, the comparative approach to ecclesiology could hardly

1 T. F. Torrance, "Thomas Ayton's 'The Original Constitution of the Christian Church,'" in *Reformation and Revolution*, ed. Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1967), 274-75.

bring about doctrinal unity. The gulf between *listening* and actual doctrinal *agreement* was keenly felt by all involved. In preparation for the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in Lund, Sweden (1948), a theological commission chaired by Gustaf Aulén was appointed to study "the Universal Church in God's Design." Notable members of the commission included Georges Florovsky and Torrance's *doktorvater* Karl Barth. Comparative ecclesiology had revealed great divides between churches and between traditions. The commission felt that the greatest of these was "the difference between 'Catholic' and 'Protestant'" schools of thought. "The emphasis usually called 'Catholic' contains a primary insistence upon the visible continuity of the Church in the apostolic succession of the episcopate. The one usually called 'Protestant' primarily emphasizes the initiative of the Word of God and the response of faith, focused in the doctrine of justification *sola fide*."[2]

Each side of the *Catholic-Protestant* divide tended to favor a particular biblical image for the church. John Robert Nelson maps the fault lines of this divide as follows:

> The Christians of the "Catholic" style (Roman, Anglican, and others) gave primary attention to the organic nature of the Church, as a living unity, a body. They saw the Church as a continuing, comprehensive community, into which infants were born and baptized, within which members were regularly and frequently nourished by Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, and over which the bishops and priests as representatives of Christ and the apostles ruled with a pastoral and priestly power. Distinct from these were the Christians of "Protestant" style, who thought of the Church as the people of God, called together for His service, and freely responding in the confession of faith and acceptance of the covenant.[3]

The body of Christ image was highly favored in the papers prepared by the aforementioned commission. Karl Barth's contribution stands as a notable exception, favoring instead a depiction of the church as an "event" of divine

2 "Report of Section I," in Oliver S. Tomkins, *The Universal Church in God's Design* (New York, Harper Brothers, 1948), 205.

3 John Robert Nelson, "Toward an Ecumenical Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 31.4 (1970), 650. See also Carl E. Braaten, *Mother Church: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), 28-9. Many Reformed theologians favor the *populus Dei* image "partly because of its comprehensive reference, uniting O.T. and N.T. believers," and partly because of the historic development of "the reformed doctrine of the covenant." Edmund Clowney, "Interpreting the Biblical Models of the Church: A Hermeneutical Deepening of Ecclesiology," in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church*, ed. D. A. Carson (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1984), 80.

summons.[4] His piece is characterized by the prayerful hope and expectation that God is acting to unite the church in the ecumenical movement.

Torrance expressed some dissatisfaction with the Amsterdam reports. While many viewed the Catholic-Protestant divide simply as a tug-of-war between ecclesiologies of "event" and "continuity," Torrance perceived in this tension a failure on both sides to properly work out the interrelation between Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. He appreciated aspects of Barth's paper, but felt it should be balanced by an account of the objective incorporation of the church into Christ's humanity, which "does not come out strongly enough in his essay."[5] Indeed, one must "take with full candour and seriousness the teaching of the New Testament that the Church is the Body of Christ," Torrance argued, for "the deepest difference between 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' theology in regard to the church is to be found *here*, in the insistence that the Church, her life in the tensions of history, her growth toward Fullness, are to be understood *exclusively* in terms of Christology."[6] What is meant by this insistence? How does the image of the body of Christ specify the relation between ecclesiology and Christology? To answer these questions, we must first examine the manner in which Torrance's ecclesiology is both *critically realist* and *Christologically corrective.*

Christological Correction

I

In his ecumenical writings, Torrance is consistently adamant that "we must take in earnest the work of Christological correction of the form and order of the Church."[7] *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum Verbi Dei.* The Word is not a domesticated abstract principle or figurehead which the community may deploy to rally or restructure itself. Rather, the Word is the Son of God, the *personal* and *creative* Word, who brings the church into being and sanctifies it through free self-giving love. For Torrance, Christological correction is not a mere reordering or reorganization of ecclesial thought around a particularly useful but benign *leitmotif*. It is, rather, the active exercise of the lordship of Christ

4 Karl Barth, "The Church – the Living Congregation of the Living Lord Jesus Christ," in Tomkins, *The Universal Church in God's Design,* 67-76.

5 T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Vol. 1: Order and Disorder* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 210.

6 *CAC1*, 63. Emphasis mine.

7 Ibid., 81. For similar statements on the corrective task of dogmatics, see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.1, ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 4.

over his people, to which the community must respond in joyous submission. Theology is thus not merely to be Christ-centered but Christ-ruled, keeping in view Christ's continued acting presence among his people through the power of the Holy Spirit. "In the very act of our knowing Christ he is the master, we are the mastered."[8]

For Torrance, the principle of ecclesial reformation must be given a dimension of depth reaching back into the reality of Christ's incarnate existence. He argues that the Son assumed our fallen human nature, healing and "correcting" it over the course of his life. Our humanity has already been made new in Christ, and through the work of the Spirit this reality is actualized in our subjective experience in space and time. The Christological correction of the church belongs to this continuing event of actualization, the breaking in of the eschatological "not yet" into the historical "already." As such, this work is not ecclesiological self-correction. The church participates in Christ's already completed work of correction.

If the church seeks unity, it is to be found in Christ. In sanctifying and correcting our humanity, Christ has reconciled human beings to God and to one another. In order to bring about this reconciliation, Christ had to enter into our enmity with one another and endure it in love, even unto death on a cross. The church, if it is to participate in the unity secured in Christ, must participate in the cruciform shape of his life and ministry, characterized by love and charity even to the point of death to self-assertion and death to its own dogmatic formulations. Yet this death is never blind compromise, but always seeks newness of life in Christ, and finds in him the living Truth which has reordered human thinking and willing toward God.

The central activity of ecclesial reformation is simply *hearing*. Through the Holy Spirit, in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, Christ still speaks. The church's posture before this teaching is one of patient and expectant receptivity. Torrance explains that in Hebrew thought, "the emphasis falls upon hearing [the] Word, letting it speak to us out of itself, and upon the obedience of the mind in response to it. The principle involved here can be spoken of as knowledge of an object in accordance with its nature."[9] In other words, this is knowledge which is determined *kata phusin* (κατὰ φύσιν, "according to the known object's nature or reality") in contradistinction to knowledge which is poetic or thetic, determined *kata thesin* (κατὰ θέσιν, "according to arbitrary convention").[10] In a kataphysical

8 T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* (Paternoster, Milton Keynes UK, 2008), 2.

9 T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM, 1965), 170.

10 T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 1991), 51; cf. *Reconstruction*, 48.

theological method the hearer adopts a posture of openness, eager to reform his thought and fully repent in light of the authoritative truth of the self-revealing object (God in Christ).[11] Activity, not passivity, is requisite—but this is the activity of ecclesial self-denial and obedience, not self-assertion.

Torrance's method of inquiry into ecclesiology, as into all other spheres of theology, is that of *critical realism*.[12] It is *realism* because the object known is other to or outside of the knower. It is *critical* because knowledge of the object is determined by the object itself.[13] Thus, in theology, our knowledge of God is properly determined not by our own speculative projection, but by the reality of God himself as revealed in Jesus Christ. This determination is *dialogical*, for it occurs amidst the holy conversation between God and his people. The Word teaches, and the community responds in obedience and worship.

What of ecclesiology? Even the church's knowledge of *itself* must be characterized by this dialogical critical realism, for the true form of the church lies outside its most proximate or empirical manifestation: "Christ clothed with His Gospel is the essence of the Church."[14] Indeed, "Christ is the Church," although "it cannot be said that the Church is Christ, for Christ is infinitely more than the Church, although in his grace he will not be without it."[15] Thus, in his speaking to the church and his presence in its midst, Christ reveals what the church is to be, and conforms it to the image of his body. Even the God-church dialogical relation itself finds its essence in Christ, who "is both the embodiment of God's Word to man, and the embodiment of man's obedient Word to God.

11 *Reconstruction*, 170.

12 P. Mark Achtemeier, "The Truth of Tradition: Critical Realism in the Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre and T. F. Torrance," *SJT* 47.3 (August 1994), 355-74.

13 See the discussions of "critical realism" in N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 35-36; Paul La Montagne, *Barth and Rationality: Critical Realism in Theology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 14-18.

14 *CAC1*, 107.

15 T. F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert Walker (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 362; "Report of the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church (European Section)," in *Faith and Order Findings*: *The Report to the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order*, ed. Paul Minear (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1963), 47. Torrance argues that this realist ecclesiology, grounded in the doctrine of the incarnation, is crucial for understanding the visible church aright as the body of Christ in history: "For Nicene ecclesiology the focus of attention was on the incorporation of believers into the Body of Christ on the ground of the reconciliation with God which he had accomplished in and through his bodily death and resurrection. . . . Any failure to grasp the implications of this Nicene theology for a realist and unitary doctrine of the Church opened the door for the identification of the real Church with a spiritualized timeless and spaceless magnitude." *TF*, 276.

Within the dialogue of the divine-human life of Jesus, as the self-giving of God to man and the obedience of the Son to the Father, Revelation is both given and received, and as such is essentially historical and personal in nature."[16] Even further, the task of Christological correction or reformation finds its essential pattern in Christ, who assumed our fallen humanity and healed (corrected) it over the course of his earthly ministry. Thus, the necessity of ecclesial reformation is pressed upon the church by the very reality of Christ's humanity. Far from being the unique habit of one particular tradition, reformation is fundamental to all faithful Christian traditions.

The deep internal relation between correction and reunification in Christ accounts for the essentially Protestant character of the ecumenical movement, Torrance argues. "This diverse ecumenical movement stems from the Reformation itself, and represents the delayed-action effect of the Church's attempt in the sixteenth century to realize the evangelical unity and universality of the Catholic Church through renewal and reformation on its apostolic basis, [though] ultimately it is rooted beyond the Reformation in the spiritual and evangelical intention of the Church throughout the centuries to embody the distinctively Christian way of life in the world in forms appropriate to the original foundation of the Church in Jesus Christ."[17] In other words, the Reformation historically modelled Christological correction, but the impulse that brought it to life may be traced further back to the very apostolic roots of Christianity. The Reformers sought to reclaim and reconstruct biblical and patristic modes of thought and action.

At the same time, Torrance argues, the Reformation incited a rejection of static modes of thought pervasive in medieval scholasticism. "The whole movement of the Reformation may well be regarded as a Christological criticism of the notions of Church, Ministry, and Sacraments as they had developed through the Dark and Middle Ages in strange detachment from the high Christology of Nicaea and Chalcedon. The time has come to undertake this task again, and to set forth in truly dogmatic form the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ."[18] That may be regarded as the official *mission statement* of Torrance's

16 T. F. Torrance, *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), lxvi.

17 T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 40. John T. McNeill echoes this view: "Living Calvinism has always reached beyond its existing ecclesiastical status, seeking union and intercommunion. . . . The Calvinist element in Protestantism has taken a prominent part in the twentieth-century ecumenical advance." *The History and Character of Calvinism* (Oxford: OUP, 1954), 438. For an extended treatment of this history, see 374-89, as well as John T. McNeill, *Unitive Protestantism*: *The Ecumenical Spirit and Its Persistent Expression* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1964).

18 *CAC1*, 230.

ecclesiological writings, the core thesis by which they are bound and to which they are ordered. His aim, in the legacy of the Reformers, is to "[make] central and predominant the classical faith of the Catholic Church in Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity, and [to carry] out a Christological correction of the empirical Catholic Church," bringing "the whole area of applied salvation . . . into line with Christ and his Gospel."[19] This is not an inherently schismatic move, but rather an attempt to unify the church around the truth of Christ.

In his concept of Christological correction, Torrance weds the two emphases of the Protestant and Catholic ecumenical camps, while at the same time turning common understandings of these emphases on their heads. Yes, Torrance affirms with the Protestants, the congregation of the church is an *event* of divine summons and reformation. Yet this is an event of *incorporation* which corresponds to and actualizes in our subjective experience the benefits of the Christological event of *incarnation*. In the incarnation Christ took upon himself our human nature and transformed it with sanctifying power. He has already incorporated us into himself in the incarnation, but through the Holy Spirit this incorporation is actualized in our subjective experience and we *become* what we already *are* in him. We become his body, the body of the new humanity. Christ is the church, and its formation is an event in *his body*, and an event in our experience insofar as we become his body through the unitive power of the Holy Spirit. People and body, event and continuity, already and not yet – these concepts are united in the person of Jesus Christ, and thus so in Torrance's Christological ecclesiology.

If Christology is determinative in this way, however, the event of ecclesial congregation cannot be viewed as merely a free social gathering of like-minded religious folk, and the continuity of the church catholic cannot be viewed simply in institutional or juridical terms. The event is the Christ-event, made present through the Spirit. The church's continuity is in the incarnation, in which Christ has forever united himself to our humanity, and our humanity to him and to one another in his body. Views of the church as a mere socio-religious phenomenon on the one hand, or as an *alter Christus* or extension of the incarnation on the other, simply will not do. The body and the event are Christ's, and the church partakes and participates in his life in a real but secondary way. The church never usurps Christ's place, or contributes anything new to his finished work.

19 *Reconciliation*, 44; cf. T. F. Torrance, "The Orthodox Church in Great Britain," *Participatio* 4 (2013), 334.

II

The incarnation is central to Torrance's concept of ecclesial reformation. Accordingly, the Christological concepts of the *hypostatic union* and the ὁμοούσιον both heavily determine the shape of Torrance's ecclesiology. "The doctrine of the hypostatic union, insofar as it is a faithful expression of the 'form of Christ,' can be deployed as a servant-category in the Christological correction of other doctrines such as the doctrine of the Sacraments. In such deployment it must be clearly and fully acknowledged that there is to be found in these other doctrines only a subsidiary reflexion of the 'form of Christ', and that subsidiary reflexion consists in obedience and conformity to Christ, and is in no sense a transference of 'the hypostatic union' from the doctrine of the unique Person of Christ Himself to other areas of Christian teaching."[20] In other words, Torrance wishes to deploy the hypostatic union in ecclesiology without disrupting its *sui generis* character in Christology. He attempts to accomplish this by way of analogy. An analogical relation is one neither of pure identity nor of pure difference, but "something of likeness and something of difference *proportionaliter*."[21] The church's sacramental relation to Christ is characterized by a kind of hypostatic logic without functioning as a second incarnation or reduplication of Christ's finished work.

Christ *is* the church, its essence embodied.[22] The church in history bears a *realist* relation to his ascended body, such that the meaning of its subjective life is determined and reconstructed by his objective fullness. This allows for the analogical application of Christological conceptualities to ecclesiology. The corporate image indicates a unitive relation which "must be thought out in terms of the hypostatic union of the two natures in one Person, and indeed of the terms *inconfuse*, *immutabiliter*, *indivise*, *inseparabiliter* of the Chalcedonian formula."[23] Even the notion of analogy itself bears this incarnational character, for it is only in the union of Christ's divinity and humanity that human conceptualities are filled with divine meaning (becoming meaning-filled or *meaningful*) and our analogies are given upward reference to the being of God. The result is that Christology is given a centripetal force, pulling our thought into its domain *through* derivative doctrines like ecclesiology. If Christ constitutes the wholeness of ecclesial reality, then our thinking about the church must always be thrown upwards to contemplation of his humanity.

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20 *SOF*, lxii.

21 *CAC1*, 246.

22 *Atonement*, 362.

23 *CAC1*, 231.

As Christ's redemptive consubstantiality with our humanity is actualized in the life of the church, "the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ" is also "hinged" upon the concept of ὁμοούσιον. The church is "the unique 'place' where access to the Father through the Son [is] grounded in space and time among the nations of mankind."[24] Just as Christ, in his consubstantial relation to the Father, is the Apostle of God "in the absolute sense (Heb. 3.1)," so the church, in its consubstantial relation to Christ's humanity, serves apostolically as the body of Christ, albeit in such a transparent way that its own being "retreat[s] into the background."[25] The revelation of God in Christ thus becomes "earthed in the Church as the Body of Christ" and "rooted in humanity. The Apostolate expressly formed and shaped for this purpose is the human end of the incarnational revelation."[26] The twelve apostles "are the hinges between the incarnational Revelation objectively given in Christ, and the unfolding of that once and for all in the mind of the Church as the Body of Christ."[27]

It is worth noting that here both pneumatology and ecclesiology share common themes in Torrance's thought. The Holy Spirit is ὁμοούσιος with the Father and Son. He is thus also the Apostle of Christ "in such a way that He does not draw attention to Himself or speak of His own Person, but speaks only of Christ."[28] Through his apostolic Spirit "Christ Himself dwells in the midst of the apostles, leading them into all truth and making them in a unique sense stewards of the mysteries of God and able ministers of His Spirit (1 Cor. 4.1). It is on the foundation of this oneness between Christ and His apostles that the whole Church is built up and grows up into Christ the Head as one Body with Him."[29]

In other words, through the apostolic Spirit the church becomes an apostolic body witnessing spiritually to the resurrected humanity of Jesus Christ. The church takes on the self-effacing character of the Spirit who gives it life. Pneumatology and ecclesiology share a kind of transparency to Christology, for that Word which both Spirit and church communicate in witness is Christ himself. Thus Torrance can say of pneumatology: "the doctrine of the Spirit has Christology for its content . . . so that the doctrine of the Spirit is really Christology . . . applied

24 *TF*, 278.

25 T. F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood: A Theology of Ordained Ministry* (London: T&T Clark, 1993), 26; cf. *TF*, 286.

26 Torrance, *Royal Priesthood*, 27.

27 Ibid., 28.

28 *CAC1*, 40.

29 T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Vol II: The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 85-86.

to the Church as the Body of Christ."[30] Similarly, he elsewhere remarks: "the doctrine of the church as the Body of Christ is part of Christology . . . we must learn to make the Christological reference paramount in all our thinking and understanding of the Church."[31]

As Christ is the essence of the church, it has no independent, meaningful existence apart from him. The church is *anhypostasia* in Christ, a fact "which insists on an eschatological relation between the Church and Christ in terms of His mighty acts for and in the Church."[32] That affirmation underscores the actualist aspect of Torrance's ecclesiology: the church exists by an *event* of divine action. Of course, this action is specifically the *Christ-event* – "the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."[33] Just as Christ's humanity is *more real* than our own, so the same is true of his *history* and his *time*.[34]

In Christ there is a hypostatic union between eternity and time, such that his history is "new" history. Fallen time is oriented toward death, decay, and corruption. Yet Christ assumes this fallen time and heals it by uniting it with the fullness of eternity.[35] He "has redeemed our humanity from vanity and our time from illusion, establishing Himself in the fullness of His Humanity and in the fullness of His time as the reality of our humanity and the reality of our time. This historical Jesus is no longer merely 'historical' in the sense that He belongs to history that irreversibly flows away into the past forever, but within that history He is superior historical reality as actual and live happening in the continuous present."[36] The act which sustains the being of the church is thus not sporadic or occasionalist. It is an event which does not fall into the past, time which is anchored in the fullness of eternity. The ecclesial-event is simply the actualization of the Christ-event in space and time.

On the other hand, the church is also *enhypostasia* in Christ, which means that it is given real existence and continuity, Christologically determined. By "real," of course, Torrance means Christ's fullness of reality. The church is "an ontological reality," but ecclesial ontology rests in Christ, "wholly dependent upon Him."[37]

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30 *RP*, 25.

31 *CAC1*, 93, 107.

32 *CAC1*, 248.

33 *CAC2*, 156.

34 T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time, and Resurrection* (Edinburgh: Handsel, 1976), 88-89; *RP*, 50; *CAC1*, 213.

35 *Incarnation*, 334-36.

36 *RP*, 57.

37 *CAC1*, 248.

Whereas *anhypostasia* indicates the eschatological and apocalyptic dimension of the church as the Christ-event breaking into history, *enhypostasia* indicates the teleological dimension of the church whereby it is gradually filled up to fullness with his supremely real reality. If the church is only considered anhypostatically, "we rob the Church of its ground in the Person of Christ and demolish the understanding of it as His Body." If it is only considered enhypostatically, then "we tend to entertain the false conception of the Church as a *Christus prolongatus* or an extension of the Incarnation."[38] It is clear that Torrance is here issuing a Christological correction to both sides of the aforementioned Protestant-Catholic ecumenical divide. Ecclesiologies which exclusively emphasize "event" are purely anhypostatic; ecclesiologies which exclusively emphasize "continuity" are purely enhypostatic. The ecclesiological purchase of Torrance's use of the an/en-hypostasia couplet is that a relation-in-distinction is demarcated between Christ and his church, such that the latter cannot exist apart from the former, yet nonetheless is given real and full existence *in* the former.

The an/en-hypostasia couplet further manifests the gravitational pull that Torrance's Christology exerts upon his ecclesiology. Our humanity has been emptied of meaning by sin, because sin causes us to reject the ontologically constitutive relationship we were created to have with the Triune God. By assuming our humanity and reconciling it to God, Christ has filled our humanity with meaning once again. That is why Christ's humanity has "archetypal significance for human beings. It is in Jesus himself that we discern what the basic structure of humanity is and ought to be."[39] When we are incorporated into Christ's humanity, our empty humanity is filled with the fullness of his personal meaning.

Just as Christ is the archetypal man, he is also the essence of the church. The church does not find its identity and meaning in its own structures and institutions, but in Christ. This is supremely indicated in the body of Christ image, and is the theological basis for Torrance's import of Christological conceptualities into ecclesiology. Even the fact that the an/enhypostasia couplet can be applied to ecclesiology at all is a product of the church being filled with Christological meaningfulness. This means that the visible church is essentially self-effacing and eccentric, pointing away to the center of its life in the ascended Lord. "The Church can only be the *Vicar* of Christ not by substituting itself in Christ's place

38 Ibid., 249.

39 T. F. Torrance, "The Soul and Person in Theological Perspective," in *Religion, Reason and the Self: Essays in Honour of Hywel D. Lewis*, ed. by Stewart D. Sutherland, T. A. Roberts (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982), 115.

but by letting Christ substitute himself in the place of the Church."[40] This is Torrance's solution to ecumenical divisions. He does not assert one tradition over against another, but exhorts all traditions to reform as Christ's body in the self-revealing presence of the incarnate Lord.

Incarnational Analogy

The New Testament weaves a tapestry of piquant images to describe the reality of the church. Paul S. Minear's book *Images of the Church in the New Testament* – which remains the most extensive study of the topic to date – lists ninety-six unique figures.[41] Preponderant images include "the people of God," "the bride of Christ," "the temple of the Holy Spirit," and "the adopted children of God." In Torrance's estimation, however, "the most significant of them is [the] expression the Body of Christ, because it is more inclusive than any of the others, provided that we understand it aright. . . . It is only when we allow the other analogies and images to play their part in opening up and enriching this concept of the Body that it can serve its purpose in declaring the nature of the Church."[42] What does Torrance mean when he states that this image is "more inclusive?" He explains: "the term 'Body' is of particular importance because it can be applied to Christ and to His Church. That is not true of all the images."[43] This dual applicability accentuates the ontological *union* between Christ and his church. The other images largely emphasize *distinctions* between Christ and the church, and are thus deemed "poorer" though "not . . . unimportant."[44] Their function is to complement an appropriate understanding of the body analogy, not to replace or surmount it.

The corporate image is remarkably complex in Torrance's thought, drawing together a host of ideas and relations, many of which are of Christological

40 *CAC1*, 252.

41 Paul Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 1960), 268-69. This book arose out of Minear's research on behalf of the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church, formed during the Third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund (1952). Elsewhere, Minear summarizes the nature of these images by observing that "all the metaphors applied to the Ecclesia stress [its] communal aspect," and "each of the metaphors points to Christ as the source of solidarity." *Eyes of Faith* (St. Louis, MO: Bethany Press, 1966), 116-17.

42 *CAC1*, 105. The corporate image is the nucleus around which the other images "orbit," 230.

43 Ibid., 105.

44 Ibid., 105-06.

provenance. It can be difficult to hold together in view the various adjectives which attend the corporate image in his thought - *somatic*, *spiritual*, *sacramental*, *mysterious*, *analogous*, *representative*, *ostensive*, among others – as well as their respective nuances of meaning. Here the term *incarnational* will provide some welcome assistance. To be clear – this is not a term which Torrance tends to use in conjunction with the corporate image. Nonetheless, it seems the most apposite. If this term is allowed to govern all the rest, it procures from them a measure of definitional clarity. This occurs because, for Torrance, many of those terms find their origin in the doctrine of the incarnation itself, and are only applied to ecclesiology in a secondary and derivative sense.

Indeed, Torrance claims that the corporate image is "the most deeply Christological" of all the New Testament ecclesial images, and for *that* reason it "is of especial importance."[45] That assertion indicates a certain *asymmetry* to the image's *dual applicability*. Christ and the church are not consolidated in a relation of μέθεξις to an overarching ideal or mystical reality called "the body." Rather, the essence of the ecclesial body is Christ's own incarnate existence. The participation of the church in him is personal and onto-relational, that of κοινωνία. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's embodied reality becomes that of the church. Thus, the corporate image "directs us at once to Christ Himself in such a way that we have to lay the emphasis upon 'of Christ' and not upon 'Body.'"[46] To speak of the church as the body of Christ is not to refer to an external relation, but one which resides *in him*, *in the incarnation*.

The most direct connections between the corporate image and the incarnation feature in Torrance's early writings. At the age of twenty-five he briefly took up a teaching post at Auburn Theological Seminary (1938-39). In one of his Auburn Christology lectures on the doctrine of the ascension, Torrance describes the corporate image as an indication that the church "is as it were the visible 'incarnation' of Christ on earth in lieu of his very Self."[47] He tends to avoid such direct rhetoric in his later writings, primarily to obviate any misinterpretation which would suggest that he deems the church to be an extension of the incarnation. Nevertheless, the affirmation that the image is an incarnational analogy is retained throughout his work. For example, in *Royal Priesthood* (1955), Torrance writes that "the Word assumed a unique form in history in the Incarnate Son" – a careful reminder that the church is not "the continuation . . .

45 *Atonement*, 363. For more reflection on the Christological content of the image, see *Reconciliation*, 68.

46 *CAC1*, 106.

47 T. F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Jesus Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 194.

of Christ nor of the Incarnation" - yet, in and through the apostolic tradition that Word "assumes still a temporal and worldly form in the Church, begetting the Church in the course of history as the Body of Christ."[48]

The repeated phrase "assumed . . . form" stands out. It is the indwelling movement of Christ's fullness which serves as the heart of the incarnational analogy. The church is not a second incarnation, but it is incarnational in a secondary and derivative sense. There is only one incarnation, to which the church through the Spirit is related by katalepsis. The church is grasped by the incarnation and given a form and nature which corresponds to it. Christ assumed *our* human nature in *his* bodily existence; that union is actualized by the Spirit in our experience, conforming us to the reality of our being in Christ.

The process of *conforming* is itself not an external relation. Our humanity has already been healed in Christ; conformity or correction is simply the actualization or indwelling fullness of that healing. Hence, all stress is placed on Christ's actual humanity as central. "The Church is not the Body of the Trinity, nor the Body of the Holy Spirit."[49] The *filial* (adopted children of the Father) and *architectonic* (temple of the Holy Spirit) images must not be interpreted apart from the governance and preeminence of the corporate image, lest they destabilize or circumvent the Christocentrism to which Torrance is committed.

There are not *two* bodies, but only *one* body – Christ's. That affirmation is correlative to the mutual involution of incarnation and incorporation in Torrance's Christology: there are not *two* unions which bring about salvation, but only *one* – the hypostatic union. "The union between Christ and the members of his body" must be regarded "as established by incarnation and atonement."[50] Incarnation and incorporation are "one living redemptive movement gathering up the church into the mystery of Christ."[51] The church is "concorporate" (σύνσωμα) with Christ, which means that it subsists in "sacramental" relation to "the all-inclusive living Body of Christ."[52] When Torrance speaks of the church as Christ's body, he means "the ontological reality of the Church concorporate with Christ himself, who not only mediates reconciliation between man and God but constitutes and embodies it in his own divine-human Reality as

48 *RP*, 69-70.

49 *CAC2*, 231. Torrance does say that "the Church is the embodiment of the Spirit of Christ," but by this he does not mean that the church is an incarnation of the Spirit, but simply that the church and Christ are united by one Spirit into one body. *CAC2*, 162.

50 *TF*, 266.

51 *CAC1*, 258.

52 *Ibid.,* 218-19.

Mediator."[53] It is crucial to recognize here that for Torrance, the church is not merely *spiritually* related to Christ in some external way. Concorporate *really means* ontologically concorporate. Christ has really reconciled *us* to God in his assumption and healing of *our* humanity. "His being was not only individual but also corporate . . . embodying in himself also the new humanity of the future."[54] Accordingly, the corporate image must be understood "very realistically as a *somatic* and not just a *pneumatic* reality."[55] To speak of the *body* of Christ is to draw attention to this somatic union; "body" indicates not only the *reality* to which the church is related but the *mode* of that relation. "The Church of Christ is not just the holy society founded to perpetuate his memory, or to observe his teachings, or to proclaim his Gospel . . . it inhered in his being as the Incarnate Son, was rooted in his humanity as the historical Jesus, and grew out of the fulfillment of his ministry in the flesh."[56]

That is an absolutely critical point for Torrance, and he deploys it in ecumenical dialogue to confront ecclesiologies in which (as he sees it) the church is only externally related to Christ. All such ecclesiologies, regardless of nomenclature – Protestant, Catholic, moral, sacramental, covenantal, mystical – tend to find their *esse* somewhere outside of Christ's humanity, often in institutionalized grace or in social programs and initiatives. Torrance relies so heavily on the corporate image because he wishes for us to not lose sight of the centrality of Christ and the soteric significance of the incarnation.

The determinative mutual involution of the *somatic* and the *pneumatic* in the corporate image should bring to mind the resurrected "spiritual body" of Christ.[57] "Spiritual body" does not mean a *spiritualized* or *incorporeal* body. "To be a spiritual body is not to be less body but more truly and completely body, for by the Spirit physical existence is redeemed from all that corrupts and undermines it, and from all or any privation of being."[58] This is not a minor point. Christ assumes our "empty" humanity and heals it, "filling" it with his own fullness of meaningful life. That movement in which God fills us up with his own fullness through Christ is absolutely fundamental to Torrance's entire theological system. In its union with him, the church is provided "a new structure, the Spiritual Body

53 T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1992), 67.

54 *Reconstruction*, 200.

55 *TF*, 291.

56 *Reconstruction*, 201.

57 *CAC1*, 113.

58 *STR*, 141.

of Christ." Consequently, "to walk according to temporal succession, or tradition, turned into a dogmatic principle (Col. 2.20; Eph. 2.2) is not to walk according to Christ (Col. 2.8), for that is to subject oneself again to the tyrant forces from which we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ."[59] Such ecclesial institutions of power are a mere empty "shadow" (σκιά) compared to the fullness of the spiritual body (Col. 2.17-18).[60] Insofar as the church is filled with his fullness and conforms to his image, it becomes *more real* and *more alive* than the passing world around it.

Much as the fallenness of Christ's humanity veiled his fullness of divine life, so also the church's fallenness veils his ascended fullness. Until his full physical manifestation at the end of time, when Christ's body appears, the true reality of ecclesial being remains hidden (Col. 3.4). The way in which the church manifests the reality of its life is by living in accordance with that reality, in defiance of the fallenness of the world. Torrance calls this "the continuing life of the church apocalypse":

> [The church] must not be schematized to the form of the secular world but must be transformed through the renewal of our mind in Christ. We are called constantly to shed the image of the corruptible and put on the image of the new creation, for we are caught up in a movement that runs counter to the regressive flow of corruption and decay and carries us forward into the future to the final and full disclosure of our real being in Christ.[61]

In short, the church's life is one of *being-in-becoming*. Through Word, sacrament, and ministry the church becomes what it already is. As it participates in Christ's life and ministry, it shares in his fullness of meaning. Yet that means, paradoxically, that the church must descend to ascend, empty itself in order to be filled, die to self in order to live. The judgment which Christ brought upon sin in the flesh must be actualized in the church's existence. That is the Christological correction of the church.

At any rate, the analysis of Torrance's thought thus far shows that "the body of Christ" is no *mere* "figure," "image," "metaphor," or "analogy," but "essential" and an "ontological reality."[62] While Torrance concedes that "when we speak of the Church as Christ's Body we are certainly using analogical language," he is adamant that "we are speaking nevertheless of an ontological fact, that is, of

59 *RP*, 53.

60 *CAC1*, 205; cf. *STR*, 90.

61 *Atonement*, 247.

62 *CAC1*, 230, 38.

a relation of being between the Church and Christ."[63] It is a *filled* rather than an *empty* analogy; the incarnation provides "its true substance and content."[64] "Christ is 'in' us through sharing our bodily existence."[65] When a soteriology of objective, incarnational atonement is affirmed, "a realist and unitary doctrine of the church" must follow, in which "*the empirical Church is the Body of Christ*."[66]

As is no doubt evident above, Torrance is clear that the corporate image does not, in his view, elide distinctions between Christ and the church. There are two reasons why: (1) the relation between Christ and his church is fundamentally asymmetrical; (2) while the relation between Christ and his church is already complete, it nonetheless awaits consummation.[67] These two qualifiers are closely associated with the corporate image in the New Testament through the concepts of *headship* and *fullness*. Christ is the head under whom the church as his body reaches toward fulfillment. Torrance brings these distinctions together as follows: "the relation between the Church and the Body of Christ is one of *koinonia* and *abiding* and is eschatologically conditioned. It is thus that the Church participates in the *wholeness* of Christ, but because that *wholeness* is already whole there can be no talk of an extension of the Incarnation or historical continuity of the Body of Christ."[68]

The Son does not *need* this body in order to be *whole*.[69] His wholeness precedes his bodily existence. Through its incorporation into him, the church is given to share in his personal wholeness. Since his embodied existence is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, it is made present to the church in history through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ecclesial life subsists in Christ's wholeness, which never becomes an inherent property of the church, for it is the wholeness of his *person* and cannot be abstracted from him. Hence, the asymmetry: "Christ is the church, but it cannot be said that the church is Christ, for Christ is infinitely more than the church, although in his grace he will not be without it."[70]

This asymmetrical relation is "eschatologically conditioned" by an *already-not yet* dialectic of presence and distance. "The Church through the Spirit is joined

63 *RP*, 29.

64 *CAC1*, 231.

65 T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time, and Incarnation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 16.

66 *TF*, 276.

67 *CAC1*, 232-33. Of course, another way in which Torrance will state this is to say the relation is *already* consummated in Christ, but we await the *appearance* of that consummation.

68 Ibid., 51.

69 *Ibid.,* 217.

70 *Atonement*, 362.

to the Body of the risen Christ and is One Body with Him; but on the other hand, Christ has removed His Body from us so that we have to think of the relation of the Church to the risen Body of Christ in terms of the distance of the ascension and the nearness of His *parousia* in Glory. There is an eschatological reserve in the relation of our union with Christ, an eschatological lag waiting for the last Word or the final Act of God."[71] During this time of reserve, Christ's wholeness is operative in such a mediated and accommodated way that creatures are not destroyed but rather transformed by it.

Another way of putting this is that Christ is himself both the *already* and the *not yet*, the Alpha and the Omega of history. In him the entire world has already been saved and judged; his work is both objective and universal. "Our salvation is already fully accomplished in what Christ has done for us, and only needs His coming again and the unveiling or apocalypse that it involves to make it manifest to all."[72] That apocalypse will determine the nature of reality with *finality*. For now, it determines the nature of the church *transformatively*. As his body, the church participates in the *already* and the *not yet* (which are at one in Christ). Ecclesial life is thus grounded both in the past and in the future. The church "is the sphere where through the presence of the Spirit the salvation-events of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension are operative here and now within history, [and] the sphere where within the old creation the new creation has broken in with power."[73]

Can the empirical church truly be regarded as *somatically* or *carnally* united to Christ if his embodied existence (in which that union subsists) has ascended into heaven? Torrance answers affirmatively: "the Church is even now the Body of the risen Christ, and therefore shares already in the risen Body of Christ."[74] In other words, the church's somatic union with the risen Christ is already a *reality*. Of course, because of the ascension, it is a reality partly held in reserve. "The Church is already sacramentally concorporate with the Risen Body of Christ but still waiting herself for the redemption of the body."[75] The church's *somatic* union with Christ must therefore be made *spiritually* present, an event that occurs in the sacraments. When the eucharist is administered (for example),

> there is enacted a *true and substantial union*, an ontological union, between Christ and His Church. Christ has become bone of our bone and flesh of our

71 *RP*, 45.

72 *Ibid.,* 47.

73 Ibid., 23.

74 *CAC1*, 114.

75 *Ibid.*, 220.

> flesh, but in the Eucharist we become bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. No union, save that of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, could be closer, without passing into absolute identity, than that between Christ and His Church as enacted in the Holy Eucharist.[76]

This enactment makes the objective reality of the *somatic* union to be subjectively real or actualized in the experience of the church, such that it really partakes of Christ's body, and is given to "taste the powers of the age to come."[77] The church's identification with the body of Christ is not abrogated by his ascension. Rather, in and through the sacraments the church really *becomes* the body in history. The church is "the Body of Christ, the Body not only of the crucified but of the risen Christ . . . the Body which, though on earth and within history, is yet made participant in his risen power."[78]

Paradoxically, the aforementioned qualifiers (asymmetry and eschatology) actually make the church *more* Christ-like, and the corporate image *more* Christological. Such distinctions pertain first and foremost to the hypostatic union. Christ's wholeness precedes the incarnation (asymmetry); his historic life is characterized by an *already-not yet* tension (eschatology). This means that the church's differences from Christ do not ultimately distance it from Christ. Christology draws ecclesiology centripetally into its domain even as distinctions are drawn between the two, for these distinctions are archetypally Christological distinctions.

Ecumenical Ecclesiology

Ecumenical interest in the corporate image continued to develop until it reached a peak in 1952 at the Third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden. Torrance was present, and argued for "a deeper understanding of Holy Baptism as our incorporation into Christ, as the basic ground for unity," and for "a thoroughly Christocentric doctrine of the Church as the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and ascended."[79] He prepared a paper titled "Eschatology and the Eucharist," in which most of his central ecclesiological ideas

76 *CAC2*, 188-89.

77 Ibid., 160.

78 *STR*, 99.

79 T. F. Torrance, "From a Christocentric to a Trinitarian Ecumenism, Ecumenical Suicide or Christocentric Renewal," unpublished paper, The Thomas F. Torrance Manuscript Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary [Box 36], 1-2.

are already extant.[80]

K. E. Skydsgaard subsequently reported that Torrance was "most helpful in stimulating discussion" on the subject of ecclesial ontology, which asks "what is the church?" As Torrance was "influential in presenting this question to the Lund Conference," he was appointed secretary of a new theological commission which would be dedicated to the study of ecclesiology and Christology.[81]

By all accounts, a paradigm shift occurred at Lund. For the first time, discussion transitioned from *comparative ecclesiology* – in which "the denominations learnt to know one another" – to *Christological ecclesiology*.[82] No longer was the conversation dominated by the assertion of opposing confessional distinctives. The entirety of the Christian tradition and what it had to say about Christ was in view. "The atmosphere of the discussion altered. . . . it seemed to us that the things which still divide us looked different when they were analyzed in the wider frame of common history than when there were merely opposed to each other in dogmatic disjunction."[83] Torrance reflected with enthusiasm that Reformed theologians were speaking the words of the church fathers, and Eastern Orthodox theologians were speaking the words of the Reformation.[84]

Unfortunately, this shift to Christological ecclesiology was rather short lived. In Geneva (1966) it was decided that the work of God in which the church shared was one of "the liberation of the oppressed," and Christ's ministry was "a struggle for political justice."[85] The focus of the ecumenical movement began to turn toward various social initiatives: feminism, environmentalism, pacifism, and the like. Attention gradually drifted from Christology and the incarnation. Ecclesiology became concerned instead with the church's effectiveness, its ability to persuade the world around it to conform to its subjective ethical ideals.

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80 The essay was republished in *CAC2*, 154-202.

81 K. E. Skydsgaard "Faith and Order: Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches," *The Ecumenical Review* 6.1 (1953), 12-13. For this commission, Torrance produced a number of study documents later compiled in the first volume of his *Conflict and Agreement in the Church*. His draft "Our oneness in Christ and our disunity as churches" was later revised by Oliver Tomkins and offered at the second WCC conference at Evanston, Illinois (1954). Once again, special emphasis was placed on the identity of the Church as the Body of Christ.

82 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 12-13. For an excellent overview of this shift, see Paul A. Crow, Jr. "The Legacy of Four World Conferences on Faith and Order," *The Ecumenical Review* 45.1 (1993), 13-26.

83 Albert Cook Outler, "A Way Forward From Lund," *The Ecumenical Review* 5.1 (1952), 63.

84 *CAC1*, 227.

85 Clowney, *The Church*, 156.

Torrance reflected upon the Uppsala Assembly (1968) with some concern:

> the decision . . . to move "from words to action" in the sphere of human relations, with wholly laudable and essentially Christian aims, has actually under its Programme to Combat Racism taken a form in which economic and political pressure is exerted against oppression – yet in the last resort that can only play into the hands of the secular will to power so evident in the widespread violence of our times. No doubt the leaders of the World Council of Churches are sincere in their claim that they do not intend to support violence, but when as a matter of fact they use political theology as a basic hermeneutic to interpret the Gospel and the mission of the Church in the world today they nevertheless become trapped in an ecclesiastical will to power, when all too easily the World Council of Churches slips into the habit of using its own worldly force as an organization together with its institutional connections with the nations as the instrumental means of exerting pressure in the attaining of its declared aims.[86]

For Torrance, the issue is not the fact that Christians are upholding the rights of the oppressed, but rather that in making this the centerpiece of ecclesial life and action they have usurped the centrality of Christ and appropriated with new vigor the sorts of power-plays that undermine rather than establish true unity.

As concentration on the centrality of Christ waned, so did Torrance's participation in the WCC: he had "little . . . direct involvement after the early 1960's in official events of Faith and Order or the World Council of Churches."[87] By Canberra (1991), Christology became so downplayed that a vague notion of "Spirit" was taken up as the conference-theme. The supposed advantage was the theme's general appeal to groups such as "feminists, who prefer 'Spirit' to male terms for God" and "adherents of non-Christian religions, who are offended by such themes as 'Jesus Christ, the Life of the World' (the theme of the Sixth Assembly), but who, as non-Christians, can dialogue about shared conceptions of 'Spirit'."[88] Today, the WCC remains a largely socio-political entity, gravely concerned about issues such as climate change and oppression. For the most part, attempts to find unity on theological issues remain occluded by the prioritization of institutional action.

Why did Torrance's ecclesiology fail to gain traction in the ecumenical movement? In part this was simply because the ecumenical movement quickly

86 *Reconciliation*, 79.

87 Matthew Baker, "The Correspondence between T. F. Torrance and Georges Florovsky," *Participatio* 4 (2013), 293.

88 Clowney, *The Church*, 20.

moved past the theological sensibilities displayed at Lund, adopting an approach more suited to establishing unity of praxis than of dogmatics. The ecumenical movement has always been characterized by a certain urgency and angst. Unity in social action has always been more immediately accessible and achievable than agreement on matters of faith and theology. Torrance was dismayed to see ecumenical ecclesiology lose its theological anchor, becoming tossed about by cultural and political tempests.

On the other hand, Torrance's comprehensive interrelation of Christology and ecclesiology was perhaps too ambitious. By embedding a *semper reformanda* principle in Christology, Torrance hoped to sway other traditions to a Reformed theological perspective. However, Torrance's historical case for Christ's assumption and sanctification of fallen humanity remains at best inconclusive, and his theological case is beset by ambiguities and inconsistencies which leave it little hope for broad acceptance.[89] Reformed theologians will nonetheless find Torrance's unique perspective of interest in constructing their own accounts of ecclesial reformation, though certain aspects of the Christological assumption of fallen humanity in Torrance's thought will themselves require reformation and revision.

Torrance's voice deserves to be heard again in the ecumenical movement. He presents a critically realist ecclesiology in which the doctrine of the church is not constructed on the basis of cultural concerns or institutional effectiveness but rather is shaped by the objective reality of the church's essence. That essence is ascended beyond history – it is the very sanctified and resurrected humanity of Christ. To speak in this way about the church need not be to render it an abstraction. The risen Christ is not an abstraction, but a Person who still addresses the church through his Spirit. The church which conforms to the reality of its being in Christ will be better prepared to effectively witness about the Gospel and to minister to the world around it.

A church, on the other hand, which defines itself purely in terms of cultural exigencies and social initiatives will only constitute itself one institution of power and self-projection among many in the world. The Christological correction of ecclesiology challenges the church's worldly notions about itself, and builds the

89 For a fair-handed treatment of the difficulties and ambiguities surrounding Torrance's concept of Christ's assumption of fallen humanity, see Kevin Chiarot, *The Unassumed is the Unhealed: The Humanity of Christ in the Christology of T. F. Torrance* (Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2013). See also Myk Habets' recent proposal that these ambiguities might be resolved via a more overt or developed Spirit Christology. "The Fallen Humanity of Christ: a Pneumatological Clarification of the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance," *Participatio* 5 (2015), 18-44.

church up into holiness in such a way that issues of social injustice may be addressed with appropriate grace and courage.

Torrance is adamant that the church not be construed as an extension of the incarnation or a second incarnation. His arguments on this topic offer a helpful corrective to certain late modern Anglo-Catholic ecclesiologies. Christ's objective work of salvation is sufficient – the church does not add to this work or bring it to completion. Rather, Torrance argues that the church is given to participate in Christ's already completed work, witnessing to the salvation that he alone has accomplished. Again, courage is offered to the church. Victory is assured in Christ.

Ecumenical theologians will find in Torrance's ecclesiology a treasure trove of careful thought and powerful insight, as well as a challenge to the temptations which still beset ecclesiology today – the temptation either to separate Christ and the church or to cause the church to usurp Christ's place. Torrance invites us to crucify ecclesial will to power, and so to put to death the power struggles which so often characterize our divisions. He reminds us that in Christ the church will find its unity, its peace, its reconciliation, and its life.

WHERE ARE THE FRUITS OF LOVE?

T. F. Torrance, The Vicarious Humanity of Christ, and Ecclesiology

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Abstract: *The fruits of love should be found in the community of Jesus Christ, the church. But that is often not the case. It may be that the church suffers from "theological anemia" in its Christology and soteriology. T. F. Torrance's doctrine of the vicarious humanity, not just death, of Christ offers an alternative. Based on the eternal trinitarian relationship of love, the Father in love sends the Son, and the Son responds with a perfect response of love to the Father. This is a love that is a free love, not out of a compulsion or need to love. Here is the basis for the free acts of both giving and receiving love in the community of Christ, the church.*

"Sheer Action" as the Fruit of Love

Love is known by "sheer action," Kierkegaard argues. (Perhaps it is silly that one should even "argue" about "action"! Well, SK was always known for irony!) "Disembodied love" is not real love, Ray Anderson contends.[1] Love is known by its fruit. The biblical testimony that "love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1) is not to mean a coercive act. Love builds up, so it does not bulldoze; it does not pulverize, even if it means destroying in order to establish something new, like love in someone else.[2] No, building up another in love means controlling oneself, not trying to control another.[3] But Kierkegaard interestingly claims that the source of this fruit is "the hidden life of love."[4] In doing so he brings us back to the question of need.

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1 Ray S. Anderson, *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 227.

2 S. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love,* ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 216.

3 Ibid., 217.

4 Ibid., 10.

We need to love and to be loved. We need community. We need the vicarious humanity of Christ in the life of the church, as suggested by T. F. Torrance and others.

Yet this love presupposes love is in the other person; this can be very presumptuous.[5] Only the Son can presume that of the Father. That is why we need the vicarious love of the Son. We cannot and should not presume upon the love of another, as much as we need to love and want to be loved. This "sheer action" of love is originally an eternal trinitarian reality within God, the opposite of a disembodied love, love that is only an ideal, a romantic illusion at best, a psychotic dysfunction at worst. In contrast, the triune love is a love that can "believe all things" (1 Cor. 13:7) with the Son and makes his love more embodied all the time, in his body and in the world, as erring and misguided as it is.[6] That love does not live merely by the empirical, but by the trust of the Son of God.

A Need Fulfilled?

Is the need to love and to be loved a joy of life or a curse? And is it truly divine love if it simply satisfies a need? Is there a need in the triune God to love, or is love eternally a choice, even in God, especially as expressed in the incarnate response of love to the Father by the Son, done for us and in our behalf, in a vicarious way? If God is compelled by his very nature of being "the God of love" to love, would not God be like the mean stepfather, forced by marriage to "love" his stepchildren, but whose acts toward the children are often cruel and spiteful. And what kind of love can be that ignited among the children? They may never see an example of love in their lives.

A need is found, however, when one knows the trustworthiness of the one who is loved. The Son knows that in the Father. Even if the Son doubts in Gethsemane or on the Cross, the love by which he is loved is greater than any doubt he might have. Love does not fear doubt, Ray Anderson reminds us, for it does not spring from reason but from reality, where love says to "doubt love if it dare!"[7]

Jesus Christ reveals God truly, although in human flesh; he is not just a Halloween costume that speaks of God. Torrance's words are unforgettable: "God's revelation is identical with himself in the oneness and differentiation of God within his own eternal Being as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for what God is

5 Ibid., 219.

6 Ibid., 221.

7 Ray S. Anderson, *Soulprints: Personal Reflections on Faith and Love* (Huntington Beach, CA: Ray S. Anderson, 1996), 72.

toward us in his historical self-manifestation in the Gospel as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he is revealed to be inherently and eternally in himself."[8] Torrance seems to allow for no wiggle room here; the "historical self-manifestation" in Jesus Christ reveals the eternal God. But he will have a caveat. Yes, the *homoousion* itself of the Nicene Creed theologically tells us "that what God is antecedently, eternally, and inherently in himself he is indeed toward us in the incarnate economy of his saving action in Jesus Christ on behalf."[9] Since the Son is of the "same substance" of the Father, his incarnation reveals the divine Godhead. The immanence of the incarnation is no barrier to divine revelation. Both the *homoousion* of the Son and the mission of the Spirit from the Father through the incarnate Son "have an essential place within the very life of God."[10] Yet this revelation also reveals that there is a mystery, a limitation, so that one may not read back "temporal and causal connections" of creaturely existence or what is "human and finite" into divine being, otherwise this would be a "mythological projection of ideas" unto God.[11] In a way, this would be reading a kind of "natural theology" back into God. The oneness between the Son and the Spirit allows a "signitive, not mimetic" relationship, not one that reads back into God "material and creaturely images."[12] By "signitive" I take Torrance to mean the "sign" that points beyond it, the "witness" common in Torrance's theology that refers beyond itself, in contrast to the *mimesis,* the mimicking, identifying, such as identifying the words of the Bible with God himself, as does rationalistic fundamentalism, a frequent criticism in Torrance's writings.[13]

A mimetic approach might be expected, even welcomed, as a way to involve a genuine "man-Godward" response to the "God-manward" initial movement of divine revelation of love in Jesus Christ. Should we not imitate God's love in Christ? Is this not the *imitatio Christi?* Yet this is where the vicarious humanity of Christ steps in and rules out our audacity in such an independent response.[14]

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8 T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 1.

9 Ibid. 97.

10 Ibid., 97, 99.

11 Ibid., 97.

12 Ibid., 101.

13 See the review of B.B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* in *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 7, no. 1 (1954), 104-8; *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* (Charlottesville, VA: The University of Virginia Press, 1980), 36; *Reality and Evangelical Theology.* The Payton Lectures, 1981 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 10, 16ff., 61, 68.

14 T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 106.

However, is this true if God has *chosen* these "temporal and causal connections" to communicate who he is? Truly, they are unable to communicate exhaustively who God is. And, like any analogy, they fail at points. Much more, that is true with God. But just because these connections are not exhaustively true does not mean they are not sufficient. Torrance himself often draws the distinction between our ability to *apprehend* God, because of revelation, versus an ability to *comprehend* God.[15] The eternal, infinite God of the universe we will never be able to comprehend, but we can apprehend what we know by his grace, and what we know first of all is *relational,* the relations between the Father and the Son, the love. That love, however, may surprise us. It may, for example, include "obedience," "worship," even "faith," all actions of the Son towards the Father, in response to the Father's love. We must be careful, of course, not to read our ideas of love into the divine, triune love, but instead be taught what divine love is. This is the challenge, is it not?

Jesus Christ himself, Torrance contends, as "the one and only Form and Image of God given to us," is "the crucial point of reference" that will "filter away" from our conceiving of God "all that is inappropriate or foreign to him such as, for example, sexual relations or distinctions in gender which by their nature belong only to creaturely beings."[16] But did not the Creator become the creature in some paradoxical way which we cannot understand in the incarnation? Jesus Christ was a male. There must be stronger, more specific criteria for knowledge of what in the economic Trinity reveals the immanent, or ontological, Trinity. And is Torrance helpful when he speaks of the coordination of the *homoousion* of the Son with the *homoousion* of the Spirit as a criterion? In what way? He is not specific. However, when he continues to speak of the relation between "the homoousial oneness between the economic Trinity and the transcendent Trinity" and "the doctrine of the perichoretic relations within the eternal Communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," his work provides much more promise. For *perichoresis* speaks of the "mutual indwelling" of love between the persons of the Trinity. The criteria (for what we know in the economic Trinity, such as in the incarnation, that is a revelation of the eternal(immanent or ontological) nature of God) are the acts of *love* which the Spirit leads (Luke 4:1) the humanity of Christ to do in obedience to the Father. The "obedience" of the Son (not understood exclusively in terms of our experience of "obedience," however), is one example. The Son responds to the Father's love with obedience, and obedience of love, along with faith, service, and worship, in the vicarious humanity of Christ. How

15 Ibid., 26.

16 Ibid., 107.

can we deny this?

Because we can only approach the ineffable eternal being of God with fear and trembling, we rush to the vicarious humanity of Christ in his priesthood and mediation, realizing that that the only way to know God in a "godly" way is through "godly ways of thought and speech," the way of worship, which is best exemplified by Christ the High Priest (in Hebrews).[17] The fruit of love is found in our participation in this eternal life of love.

The result of Athanasius' crusade for the doctrine of the *homoousion* was to emphasize in the church a unity between the Father and Son, finding their unity of love in contrast to the separation found in Arius' doctrine. Arius could claim that the ontological distinction between the Father and the Son might argue more strongly for love, but the *homoousion* enabled Athanasius to bring love into his understanding of the being of God, the being in God known in God's acts, as Torrance puts it. Love is therefore essential to who God is. The vicarious humanity of Christ, that man-Godward act, reflects that which is eternal in God, a response of love to love. That is a fruit of love. Love continues to grow. The Father is not the Father without the Son, the very basis for mutual indwelling, the communion of *perichoresis.*[18] Each person of the Trinity retains his individuality, in a union without confusion. *Perichoresis* upholds, and does not destroy, distinctiveness. Reciprocity establishes distinctiveness.[19] The fruit of love is found in reciprocal relations, in community. That is our goal to which we are heading. The fruit of love, in other words, is eschatological. We may be in loneliness now (Kierkegaard!), but we are heading towards community. (Why do the monks always seek a monastery?)

The One Purpose of God's Love

Yet, Jesus Christ manifests to us God's love in a particular form: as John McLeod Campbell claims, the very nature of the incarnation is to declare the one purpose of God's love, including the Father who sends the Son.[20] Christ is doing nothing more and nothing less than to draw us to the Father in a life

17 Ibid., 110-11. Cf. Athanasius in his *Orations against the Arians.*

18 T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 130, 132.

19 Ibid., 175.

20 John McLeod Campbell, "Campbell's Introduction (to the Second Edition)" in *The Nature of the Atonement* (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids: Handsel Press and Eerdmans, 1996), 20.

of communion.[21] The atonement, seen as the development of the incarnation (not separate from it, as is often the case), manifests this one purpose of love and is not, as in many theories of the atonement, God's attempt to reconcile justice and love. Jesus' cry on the cross is a part of the atonement, and however "Godforsaken" it may be, it is still a "presence-amid-absence" (Alan E. Lewis) in which God is there in the midst of our hells.[22] What "need" we have to be measured, Campbell continues, is not just our need "but by what God has done to meet our need."[23] We do not see a cross of a criminal as the solution to our need. This is in contrast to "the inadequate and superficial views of the gospel which so often gives peace, even to minds considerably awakened on the subject of religion."[24] Our "need" may be for "peace," but it is only our conception of "peace." God's love will not let us be satisfied with that.

God's "Holy Sorrow" of Love

At this point, Campbell brings in the notion of God's "holy sorrow" as a predicate of God's love. God is in sorrow over our sin, over our plight. God's sorrow brings forth in the humanity of Christ a perfect confession of our sins, an "Amen from the depths of the humanity of Christ to the divine condemnation of his sin."[25] The Son is the one who says, "Yes, Father, you are right, and we respond with the confession of sin." The Son declares that on our behalf and in our place. This confession of sin, Campbell continues, "has all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man – a perfect sorrow – a perfect contrition – all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection, all – excepting the personal consciousness of sin . . ."[26]

Love as Sorrow - Sorrow as Repentance

Love is the motivation for sorrow and repentance, as seen in the story of the repentant woman (Luke 7:36-50). "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much" (Luke 7:47; cf. Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1). Love

21 James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace,* 93.

22 Alan E. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,2001), 91.

23 Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (1996)*,* 21.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., 118.

26 Ibid.

as sorrow is the motivation for penitence. Penitence is not a condition in order to be accepted by God, but as C.S. Lewis remarks, this is "simply a description of what going back to him is like."[27] The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) may be more of a description of the atonement than many expect. So also is the sorrow found in the weeping of the woman who anoints Jesus in Luke 7:37-38. In fact, as R. C. Moberly comments, love here is expressed as sorrow. Sorrow does not merely accompany love, but love is expressed as sorrow for her sins.[28] But perfect penitence is only possible for one who has not sinned.[29] As C.S. Lewis says, "Only a bad person needs to repent; only a good person can repent perfectly."[30]

Jesus "Hates" His Own Life

In effect, Jesus "hated" his own life to the point of death because he acknowledged the Father's "holy sorrow."[31] Jesus commands us to give up our lives as he gave up his life. But he does this, Lewis contends, by "helping" our love and reason by God's love and reason, like a parent who holds the child's hands while the child is learning how to write.[32]

God Gathers Up Our Love and Reason

Is this adequate, however? Does God just hold our hands so we can love and reason? He does not just enable us (cf. John Cassian, Semi-Pelagianism, and John Wesley), but gathers us up with him to share in his love and reason, made manifest in love as sorrow for sins in the perfect Amen of the Son to the Father, the vicarious humanity of Christ. Lewis can speak of the need for God to become human and for us to share in "God's dying," but this process of "the perfect penitent" is only something we go through "if God does it in us." Saying "in us" is different than saying it is something God does *for* us, on our behalf and in our place. In fact, Lewis concludes that Christ as "the perfect penitent"

27 C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 60.

28 R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: Murray, 1917), 28.

29 Ibid., 43, 117.

30 C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 59.

31 Luke 14:26; cp. Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement,* 215: "He had all along said, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' In actual death He now said so . . . It is an utterance *in death*. He who thus puts their trust in the Father is *tasting death* while doing so."

32 C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* 60.

is only a "picture." "Do not mistake it for the thing itself; and if it does not help you, drop it."[33] Why then, bring this up in a discussion of "mere" Christianity, which he defines as "what it is and what it was long before I was born and whether I like it or not"?[34] Perhaps Lewis is more persuaded by the truth of the "perfect penitent," or the vicarious repentance of Christ, than he wants to admit. He certainly celebrates Christ the "new man" as the next step in the evolution of humanity, which has already arrived.[35] Christ has taken our place. This "new man" offers an utterly new life to the Father, a communion of unbroken faith, obedience, and worship, a life of love that we cannot offer, but that now we can share in.[36]

The Entire Vicarious Humanity of Christ

John McLeod Campbell's doctrine of Christ's "perfect confession" of our sins needs to be interpreted as one aspect of the entire vicarious humanity of Christ, as James Torrance argues.[37] In a world of needless and pointless suffering, only the Son has the right to believe; only he has the right to call God Father.[38] This is not done to condition the Father into loving us, but to manifest the triune being of God as a communion of love, a different doctrine of God than one that is a doctrine more reflecting the influence of Aristotle, Stoic concepts of natural law, Western jurisprudence, and post-Enlightenment thought.[39] R. C. Moberly, though not finding an "inclusive humanity" of Christ in Campbell, stresses Christ's identification with humanity as the basis of a "perfect penitence."[40] The entirety of the vicarious humanity of Christ is a picture of the "wondrous exchange" of the patristic theologians of (2 Cor. 8:9), and how deep and wide that is, as expressed by Gregory Nazianzen:

> Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become gods for his sake, since he for ours became man. He assumed the worse that he might give us the better; he became poor that we through his poverty might be rich;

33 Ibid., 61.

34 Ibid., 7.

35 Ibid., 62.

36 James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace,* 48.

37 James B. Torrance, "Introduction" to Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement,* 11.

38 Boris Bobrinskoy, *The Compassion of the Father,* trans. Anthony P. Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 104.

39 James B. Torrance, "Introduction" to Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement,* 16.

40 R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality,* 405-6.

> took upon himself the form of a servant that we might receive back our liberty; he came down that we might be exalted; he was tempted that we might conquer; he was dishonoured that he might glorify us; he died that he might save us; he ascended that he might draw to himself us, who were lying low in the fall of sin.[41]

"Becoming like Christ" is coming into that union of love between the Father, Son, and the Spirit. But we are not the ones who are doing the exaltation. We are exalted with Christ by God, with the vicarious humanity of Christ. That is the fruit of love, an actual act of substitution through exaltation, only because, first of all, there has been a humiliation.

Love as a Response by the One Who is Loved

Love is a response by one who is loved. T. F. Torrance dares to say, "Jesus Christ is our human response to God."[42] How outrageous that sounds! Is not a response, a faith and obedience to God on our part, a response to what Christ has done for us? So goes the popular theology. But does this objection take seriously enough our desperate situation, for love is both our most desperate need and problem. Jesus' response to the Father is a response of love. It becomes our response as we are united with him, our humanity united with the totality of his humanity. Jesus is both the Word of God spoken to humanity but also the Word heard by humanity.[43] And what he hears is the love of the Father, a love we find at least difficult to hear, but often simply refuse to hear in its fullness, its judgment as well as grace. This is a Word, T. F. Torrance contends, that is heard not just from above, externally, but from within us, because the Word of God in Jesus Christ has taken upon our humanity and we are united with him. This personal union is the real basis of Christ's call for us to renounce ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him.[44] The foundation for all of this is that in this act of reconciliation (response) as well as of revelation in the incarnation, the being of God is revealed. The being of God is known in his act, as Barth and Torrance are fond of saying. This means nothing less than the communication

41 Gregory Nazianzen, *Discourse* I, 4, cited by Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to the Teaching and Spirituality of the Orthodox Church (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), 192*.

42 T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ, new edition (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992),* 80.

43 T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 41.

44 Ibid., 42.

of the "mutual indwelling" (*perichoresis*) between the Father and the Son in the Spirit, the essence of divine love. This "plenitude of personal being" in the triune God overflows to us in Christ, creating a "community of personal reciprocity in love, which we speak of as the Church living in the Communion of the Spirit."[45] The fruit of love proceeds from this eternal love, even if we cannot perceive its foundation with our senses. Faith is that which is "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). We do not see Jesus Christ now, Peter writes in his first epistle, yet his readers love Jesus now, and even "rejoice with an indescribable joy" (1 Pet 1:8). Joy becomes the essence of love, even a fruit of love, even though Jesus Christ is not seen at this moment. Faith is knowledge, as Karl Barth reminds us.[46]

The Son responds in love to the Father because he knows he is already loved by the Father. This is our human response to God. We have no other. We have no other place to try to coerce God or to wonder if God loves us. We cannot be "clever" with God to think that we can earn God's love.[47] This is the story of religion, is it not? In our cleverness, as a "deceiver," Kierkegaard would say, it is we who are surprised that we are loved by one who does not make any demand for reciprocal love apart from the Son who has already met that demand for us and in our place. The one who truly loves, Kierkegaard concludes, by "believing all things," loves even "the deceiver," the one who thought he had to earn the beloved's love.[48]

The "Last Adam" and the Love of God

The apostle Paul sees Christ as the one who takes the place of Adam. Adam is a broken mirror of Christ, whom Paul refers to as "the last Adam" (1 Cor 15:44-49), the final Adam, because his origins are in heaven ("the man from heaven" – 1 Cor 15:48-49). He is, in contrast to the first Adam, "a living giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45). In Galatians Paul speaks of love as one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). So it should be no surprise that 1 Corinthians 13 (the "love" chapter) should be sandwiched between Paul's discussion of the church as the body of Christ in chapter 12 (especially relevant to that troubled Corinthian congregation) and the eschatology of Christ as the last Adam in chapter 15. In

45 T. F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 3.

46 Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 22-27.

47 Kierkegaard, *Works of Love,* 240-41.

48 Ibid., 243.

fact, an implicit Adam-Christ contrast may be in chapter 13: love "does not insist on its own way" (1 Cor 13:4) as Adam did, in contrast to Christ. Of course, the Corinthian church is more like Adam than Christ. Corinth was a community, but a distorted community that assumed (in contrast to Paul and his sufferings!) they were already "kings," already "rich" (1 Cor.4:8). The humanity of Christ is needed to take the place of the fallen humanity of Corinth.

The last Adam is the final word about humanity because he is a heavenly word, "the man from heaven." It is with him that "love abides" (1 Cor 13:8). The changeableness of human emotion, the passing of time, and the finitude of human love all challenge such a statement: "love abides." It certainly does not on this earth, at least not always. Falling away from God is not the same as simply falling away from another lover; it is falling away from love.[49] Love can cease in erotic love and friendship love; the lover can wait for a long time, but then cease to wait. Has the lover really ever been loving then?[50] Divine love abides; it waits.

Love for the Community

In Wendell Berry's novel, *Jayber Crow*, the barber Jayber sees his little rural community of Port William in a new light when the love of God takes his place, "like a father with a wayward child, whom He can't help and can't forget . . . the love, the compassion, the taking offense, the disappointment, the anger, the bearing of wounds, the weeping of tears, the forgiveness, the suffering unto death."[51] This is what it means for God to love the world (John 3:16). This love is so deep it assumes our nature. How God has loved makes everything secondary, including "belief." The community can become a community of love because it knows that it has already been loved. In this context we are reminded that the fruit of the Spirit ("love, joy, peace," etc.) is social.[52] That is where love becomes a reality. In the New Testament, the Spirit is not so much an aspect of inner psychology or creative spirituality as he is the "ecology," an environment, a place of genuine humanity, the humanity of Christ made manifest in our humanity.

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49 Ibid., 304.

50 Ibid., 303.

51 Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002), 250-52.

52 Ray S. Anderson, *An Emerging Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 159, 164; T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction (Grand Rapids, 1965),* 242.

The fruit of love, therefore, comes from an event in the life of God in which he takes upon our humanity in order to perfectly confess on our behalf and in our place, doing something we are unable to do. At the heart of the matter is love as the essential attribute of God, not simply one among many.[53] Therefore, decretal Calvinists such as John Owen and Jonathan Edwards should not restrict the mercy and love of God to only the elect. The fruit of love is possible because God is love. The Holy Spirit makes this double movement within God an event within us, enabling us to receive and understand this life.[54] So we are called on to pray in the Spirit (Rom. 8), knowing that in the Spirit there is a corresponding movement from God to our humanity and from our humanity to God just as there was in the incarnation, indeed, as there is in the Father-Son relationship in the Spirit from all eternity.[55]

The fruit of love is first seen in one person, the one who is the God who loves and the man who is loved, the one in whom is both: Jesus Christ.[56] Herein the ancient Christological controversies become important: Jesus Christ is not two persons but one, not to be confused, not to be separated (Chalcedon, 451 A.D. He is both the revealing God and the answering man to the revelation, the basis and ground of our answers, the God who loves and is loved. This is the double movement of grace. In contrast, we find it very difficult to both love and to be loved. In Jesus Christ, the covenant established between God and humanity in the Old Testament is kept from both sides, so that he reveals the essential covenantal nature of both the nature of God and the meaning of being human.

The very meaning of being human! The fruit of love says something important about being human, not just about God. This not just an empty-headed religious euphoria about the betterment of things, nor a pessimistic downturn into despair and futility. Jesus Christ really has risen from the dead. Yet this means to confront world history only with love, not with fear or hate.[57] No other choice has been given to us. Jesus Christ, in his vicarious humanity, has pushed aside any other alternative. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the resurrection of the one who has taken upon himself my humanity, in my place and on my behalf, at

53 Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement,* 73. Contra many Protestant orthodox theologies, such as in Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1933), 67.

54 T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 152.

55 Ibid., 152-53.

56 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.2, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), 667.

57 Ibid., 717.

an ontological, not merely behavioral, level.[58] If the double movement of God in the vicarious humanity of Christ bears fruit in love, then reconciliation, not sin or sickness, becomes the presupposition even for therapy, let alone for ministry. There is an "order of being," Ray Anderson suggests, that we might call love between the Father and the Son in the Spirit, that precedes our sin or sickness, which is the only thing that can engineer genuine ministry or therapy. This order of being, Anderson contends, is "belonging," a place where we can be healed, in contrast to any abstraction, where "our believing is conditioned at its source by our belonging" (Polanyi).[59]

The "Hidden" Source of Love

Love, indeed, for it to avoid superficiality, has a source, according to Kierkegaard, that is "hidden."[60] As the great country rock group The Band put it, "There's no greater love than the love that dies untold."[61] One criticizes the heart that is "worn on the sleeve." It may lack depth or substance. Yet the love "that dies untold" ("hidden"!) bears its own fruit. (Is Kierkegaard thinking of his broken engagement to Regine?) This is a "work of love." This contrasts with those who might give to charity, visit the widow, or clothe the naked, but do so in "a self-loving way."[62]

Love has a true knowledge; it is not naiveté. It is a misinterpretation of the apostle Paul to read "love believes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7) otherwise. Love knows the beloved, so it is not involved in mistrust.[63] Yet there is much that is hidden from lovers. Kierkegaard says it plainly: "Is it not so that one person never completely understands the other?"[64]

Is this ultimate "hiddenness" in the love between the Father and the Son that which bears fruit in our salvation? Is that why the Gospels refuse to describe or picture Jesus (much less the Father and the Spirit!)? The economic Trinity in

58 Ray S. Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 175.

59 Ibid., 169, citing Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 322.

60 Kierkegaard, *Works of Love,* 11.

61 The Band, "It Makes No Difference," *Northern Lights, Southern Cross* (Capitol Records), written by Robbie Robertson, 1975.

62 Kierkegaard, *Works of Love,* 13.

63 Ibid., 228.

64 Ibid., 229.

terms of Jesus' maleness, for example, should not be read into the Triune God. So also his race, his hair color, his language (God does not speak Aramaic), etc. As we have seen, Torrance speaks of these as "temporal or causal" or "material or creaturely images."[65] However, the economic Trinity (how God appears to us) is our only source for knowledge of the ontological or immanent Trinity (who God is in himself). What we know about the love between the Father and the Son is hidden. But what we know has been revealed to us in Christ. We only have the witness of Scripture about it. Therefore, we know the actions of the Son that resulted from that love. The cross, of course, could immediately be interpreted as something other than the result of love, if we did not know the testimony of the hidden love between the Father and the Son. We know it only because of the actions of faith, worship, service, and obedience by the Son in his earthly ministry on behalf of others, the vicarious humanity of Christ. These actions in obeying the Father's will are not outside the realm of the "tragic," (despite David Bentley Hart's protests, for whom there is no "pathos" in God).[66] As Ray Anderson reminds us, however, there is always something tragic about love; if nothing else, the beloved can always be absent from us.[67] Are we to retreat to a doctrine of God's *aseity* in order to resist these emotions in the triune God? Is there any other way to interpret the cry of abandonment, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"[68] What we know about God's love, in other words, is through the "sheer action" (Kierkegaard) of the vicarious *actions* of Christ. This is quite different than a sentimental message of love taught by an ancient, revered religious leader, as many often regard Jesus, even today.

God as a Human Being, Not Just Into a Human Being

These actions of God in Christ are very particular actions, actions within the stuff of human history, God came not just into a human being but as a human being, as T. F. Torrance references from the Fathers.[69] Love can only be, therefore,

65 Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God,* 97, 101.

66 David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 166-67, 355, 357, 374-76.

67 Anderson, *On Being Human,* 177-78. See also on homosexuality and the tragic in Ray S. Anderson, "Homosexuality: Theological and Pastoral Considerations" in *The Shape of Practical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 266-83.

68 Alan E. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection,* 54.

69 T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical Unity in East and West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 157. See also Christian D. Kettler, *The Vicarious Humanity of Christ and the Reality of Salvation* (Lanham, MA: University Press

particular actions of love, not a generic, sentimental, or abstract ideal. So, in *Jayber Crow,* the concrete love Jayber develops for Mattie, the woman he will never marry, and his church, even if it is not returned, becomes the occasion by which he can understand the love of God the Father in the Son. This is genuinely what it means to live by faith alone. What Jayber obtains is "love in my heart."[70] This love, the love of God for a world that does not love him, is a suffering love, the love that can break one's heart (John 1:10-11).[71] Love can disappoint; love can fail. Our love can be thrown back at us in disregard. Is this not what eternal damnation is? We might become so "locked up in ourselves" that the light of God in Jesus is thrown back at God with such a force that "even the ultimate Love of God" becomes "a kind of hell for us."[72] The fruit of love, in other words, can be nothing less than suffering. We should not be surprised. The Father has "sorrow" for our sins, but that does not stop the Son from going to the cross. What seems to be the failure of the Father in putting the Son on the cross is really the victory of the Son.[73]

Such a suffering love is a presence that does not need doubt. He never had any doubts, says T. F. Torrance of himself, not because of the brilliant logic of his theology, but because of his mother. A loving Christian family made knowledge of God "the most natural, intuitive thing of all."[74] Knowing God through Jesus Christ is concrete and particular, not because of any analogy of being, but because the fruit of that love is seen in loving relationships, of which the parent and the child is foremost to our humanity. The particular is the means by which we know the universal. In a biblical paradigm, the one is always the basis for blessing the many, from Israel to the nations, to Jesus and all humanity.[75] We can live with the dialectic of joy and despair because, as Paul teaches, "the genuineness of your love" can even be expressed in the less than perfect Corinthian congregation by their concrete acts of love in helping to meet the needs of the Jerusalem church (2 Cor. 8:8). He has a theological reason for believing this, as expressed in the

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of America, 1991), 122.

70 Berry, *Jayber Crow,* 247-54.

71 Ibid.*,* 254.

72 T. F. Torrance, "Immortality and Light" in *Transformation and Convergence in the Framework of Knowledge in the Framework of Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 348.

73 Alan E. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection,* 54-55.

74 "Thomas F. Torrance" in *Roundtable: Conversations with European Theologians,* edited by Michael Baumann (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 111.

75 James B. Torrance, "The Vicarious Humanity of Christ" in *The Incarnation,* edited by T. F. Torrance, 137-141 and *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace,* 50-53.

next verse: "For you know the generous act (grace) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Paul does not simply exhort the Corinthians to love; he points them to "the wonderful exchange," as the Fathers and John Calvin put it, in the double movement of love made manifest in the incarnation itself. The churches of Macedonia are an example to the Corinthians of those who have been objects of the grace of God in the midst of "a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy, and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part" (2 Cor. 8:1-2). The fruit of love is particular because the incarnation was a particular act of God's love.

Such love does not need doubt, yet it is not afraid of doubt either. Love exists because of reality, not of doubt, as Ray Anderson claims, for love springs from reality, the particular, not from reason, our logical configurations.[76] Reality intervenes, as seen in the incarnation. Doubt has to deal with reality of love, as Jayber did in his love for Mattie. "We cannot know God behind his back," Torrance argues, "as it were, by stealing knowledge of him, for we may know him only in accordance with the way he has actually taken in revealing himself."[77] God is under no compulsion to reveal himself, but in his personal revelation in Christ we are presented with a reality of love for us that makes a demand upon us because it is the demand of reality. With such love, faith is never far behind. How can one truly love without faith, without trust in the beloved? Such a love, such a faith, is what the Son has for the Father. This is the reality of the incarnation and the basis of the community, the church.

76 Anderson, *Soulprints*, 72.

77 T. F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 201 n. 3.

ECCLESIOLOGICAL HIGHS AND LOWS:

Thomas F. Torrance's Ecclesiological Influence on Ray S. Anderson

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines highlights of the ecclesiologies of Thomas F. Torrance and his student Ray S. Anderson. Torrance's ecclesiology exhibits traits commonly understood as "high church" while Anderson's ecclesiology can be characterized as "low church." Yet Torrance and Anderson develop their respective ecclesiologies by way of common Christological and Pneumatological commitments, and do so in ways that allow them to differ from conventional "high" and "low" church ecclesiologies. Torrance's theological influence on Anderson's ecclesiology presents a fertile case study for both ecclesiology and theological method.*

If my memory is accurate, I came across the name and under the influence of T. F. Torrance only a short time before having the same experience with Ray S. Anderson. Torrance's *Reality and Evangelical Theology*[1] set off a seismic and disorienting, but no less happy, unsettling and resettling of my theological world. After an interlude of several years, more of Torrance's work crossed my path, but in the interim that salutary role was filled by Ray Anderson. I happened upon two of Anderson's journal articles that had a similar effect to that of Torrance's book. Then one of Anderson's D.Min. students gave me a pre-publication manuscript entitled "The Praxis of Pentecost," later to be published as *Ministry on the Fireline*.[2] I knew at that point that my world would never be the same. Never having been a student at a school where either one taught, I never had the

1 Thomas F. Torrance, *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

2 Ray S. Anderson, *Ministry on the Fireline: A Practical Theology for an Empowered Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993).

privilege of meeting Professor Torrance personally and only met Dr. Anderson once. Yet I cannot overstate the quality and quantity of influence that each has wielded in my faith, theological journey, and teaching.

Over the years I procured almost every work I could get my hands on (or afford, in Torrance's case) from both theologians, seeking to get inside their ways of theological thinking. During that time the subject of ecclesiology never stood out to me as a prominent subject for either of them. Certainly, I knew of their respective ecclesiastical alliances—Torrance with the Church of Scotland and Anderson with the Evangelical Free Church of America—yet all that seemed ancillary to their animating, core theological concerns. That was an oversight on my part, to say the least. Ecclesiology received more than modest amounts of attention from each (especially Torrance) and seems to have been a sort of theological laboratory for them. To draw an analogy from their favorite epistemologist, Michael Polanyi, ecclesiology is part of their theological subsidiary awareness that both depends upon and allows for other theological themes to take prominence in their focal awareness.[3]

Thomas F. Torrance's (1913 – 2007) ecclesiological commitments reflect more longevity and continuity as he had at least a third generation connection to the Church of Scotland.[4] Yet, this familial ecclesiology was experienced and expressed through his parents' work with the China Inland Mission. As a result of political unrest in China, the family returned to their native Scotland in 1927 where, interestingly, the family attended a Baptist church for a while, "finding its theological position more acceptable than that of the local kirk."[5] In Scotland Torrance completed his secondary education, followed by MA and BD degrees at the University of Edinburgh. In 1937-38 he entered postgraduate studies under Karl Barth in Basel, eventually completing his doctoral qualification in 1946 after years of ministry in both parish and military chaplaincy. The character of his academic career, propelled by a commitment to "theological ministry in service to the gospel,"[6] was shaped profoundly by these years of pastoral ministry. As McGrath observes, "Every Barth has a Safenwil, a period of pastoral ministry which forces correlation of the themes of systematic theology with the realities of human existence."[7] From 1950 to 1979 he served on the faculty of New College at the

3 Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 88, 92, 115.

4 Alister E. McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 6.

5 Ibid., 20.

6 Ibid., 42.

7 Ibid., 60.

University of Edinburgh, lecturing initially in Church History, then transitioning to Dogmatics in 1952.[8] Throughout his academic career he maintained a compelling interest in the scientific methodology of theology, particularly as defined by and exemplified in the themes of God's redeeming revelation through the Incarnation and Atonement.[9]

Ray S. Anderson (1926 – 2009) began his ecclesiological journey experientially in the Lutheran tradition while growing up on a farm outside Wilmot, South Dakota. After serving in the Army Air Force during World War II, completing a bachelor's degree at South Dakota State University, then farming for several years,[10] he completed a BD at Fuller Theological Seminary and served for a decade as founding pastor of the Covina Evangelical Free Church. In 1970 he began PhD studies under Torrance at the University of Edinburgh.[11] Following completion of his PhD he taught at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California for four years, then returned to Fuller Theological Seminary in 1976 to join the faculty. While on the faculty at Fuller, Anderson and several friends launched Harbour Fellowship, a small non-denominational church that met in the multi-purpose room of an elementary school in Huntington Beach, CA. It was, as Anderson described it, "the high of low churches."[12] Harbour Fellowship's integration of structural flexibility and selective liturgical practice (e.g., weekly celebration of the Eucharist) provided a "theological laboratory"[13] for Anderson's commitment to theological *praxis.*[14] Though ecclesiology proper was not a prominent concern

8 I am indebted to McGrath's *Intellectual Biography* for the bulk of the material in this paragraph.

9 Fittingly, the two volumes of his published lecture notes, edited by his nephew Robert T. Walker, are entitled *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008) and *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009).

10 By his frequent admission and as reflected in numerous of his writings, his early life on the farm deeply influenced the shape of his theological thinking.

11 Anderson's life pilgrimage from farming to seminary to pastoral ministry to academia factors significantly into the shape of his theological thinking and is well-chronicled in several of his own publications, as well as by Christian D. Kettler in *Reading Ray S. Anderson: Theology as Ministry, Ministry as Theology* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), ix-xix; Christian D. Kettler and Todd H. Speidell, eds., *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society, and Family: Essays in Honor of Ray S. Anderson* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1990), xiii-xvii.

12 Kettler, *Reading Ray S. Anderson*, xvii and 96.

13 Ibid., 96.

14 The particular manner in which Anderson uses the word *praxis* is crucial to understanding his theological method. See *Ministry on the Fireline*, 27-30, where he explains how he draws upon Aristotle's definition of the term (in *Nicomachean Ethics*) as

in his published writings, he frequently expressed his theology in terms of its ecclesiological character and implications.[15]

This article explores the question of how Torrance's ecclesiology influenced Anderson's ecclesiology. What makes this question interesting is that their respective ecclesiologies were, at least ostensibly, quite different. A strict definition of "high church" might not fit Torrance in every way. The label was originally associated with the Church of England and its emphasis on liturgy, sacraments, clerical orders, the use of clerical vestments, and in some cases "the importance of apostolic succession and the historical continuity of Anglican bishops with the early church."[16] Yet, more broadly understood, Torrance can be considered "high church" by commitments such as his theology of the Eucharist and his emphases on ecclesiastical polity and the orders of ministry. Certainly, the ecclesiastical context of his work reflects the questions and concerns generally considered "high church."

Whether or in what sense the Church of Scotland and Torrance in particular should be classified as "high church," their ecclesiastical ethos clearly contrasts with Anderson and the "low church" ethos of the Evangelical Free Church of America. The EFCA derived from two of several pietistic groups that migrated to the United States from the Scandinavian countries, having broken away from the Lutheran church in that setting.[17] Though Anderson grew up as a Lutheran in South Dakota, he found his way into the EFCA and eventually into an entirely non-denominational ecclesiastical environment.

By Anderson's own testimony and as evidenced throughout his writings, Torrance's influential on his theological thinking can hardly be overstated.[18] Though Anderson never directly explored Torrance's ecclesiology, the imprints are clear and instructional, illuminating the implications and texture of the theological themes that Anderson drew from Torrance. The macro-level influence of Torrance's theology on Anderson's ecclesiology can be traced along Trinitarian

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action that embodies its telos.

15 For example, see *Ministry on the Fireline* and *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006).

16 See www.anglican.ca/help/faq/high-low-church.

17 The Swedish Evangelical Covenant and the Swedish Baptists were also among these groups. The Swedish Evangelical Free Church and the Danish-Norwegian Evangelical Free Church eventually merged in 1950 to become the Evangelical Free Church of America. Key features of EFCA churches are their commitment to congregational polity and biblical inerrancy. See Calvin B. Hanson, *What It Means to be Free: A History of the Evangelical Free Church of America* (Minneapolis: Free Church Publications, 1990).

18 Ray S. Anderson, "The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance," *Participatio* 1 (2009): 49-50.

lines. More specifically, the micro-level influence reflects Torrance's familiar emphases on the Incarnation and the role of the Holy Spirit. What do we have to learn from the distinctive way in which Anderson appealed to Torrance, and especially these commitments, in his ecclesiology?

Key Features of Torrance's Ecclesiology

Thorough analysis of Torrance's ecclesiology has already been offered by more capable TFT scholars.[19] What follows will not rehearse those analyses but simply point to salient features of Torrance's ecclesiology that warrant its classification as "high church" and that illuminate continuity with and influence upon Anderson's ecclesiology. It will also be seen that the particular ecclesiological features that locate Torrance within the "high church" realm are at the same time theologically-based challenges to or departures from some "high church" approaches, which allows for ecclesiological linkages with Anderson's "low church" approach. Torrance's ecclesiology thus turns out to have surprisingly portable implications for ecclesiastical circles quite different from his own, which is not always the case with "high church" ecclesiologies.

Anyone who possesses even a modest acquaintance with Torrance's thought knows that his ecclesiology is deeply and distinctly Christological. That may seem to be a widespread affirmation within Christian orthodoxy. However, Torrance takes pains to provide a particularly nuanced Christology as the anchor for his ecclesiology. He keeps ecclesiology clearly subservient to Christology by warning against ecclesiological moves (Roman Catholic or Protestant, and even "Free Churches") that effectively shift the focus from Christology to anthropology.[20] Thus, he insists,

> [W]e must not yield to the temptation to think of the Church as an independent hypostatic reality. It was not the Church that was pre-existent and became incarnate; it was not the Church that was assumed into hypostatic union with the Deity; it was not the Church that was crucified for our salvation and raised for our justification; it was not the Church that ascended to the right hand of God the Almighty . . . but Jesus Christ alone, the Only-Begotten Son of God.[21]

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19 See Elmer M. Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian and Scientific Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), chapter 7 and Paul D. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), chapter 8.

20 T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church*, vol. 1, *Order and Disorder* (London: Lutterworth, 1959), 14.

21 Ibid., 15-16.

Therefore he claims, "It is . . . the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ that must engage our attention, but that means the subordination of the Church at every point to Christ Himself; it does not mean that the Church occupies the centre of our attention but Christ alone."[22] Accordingly, "[t]he doctrine of the Church must be formulated . . . as a correlate of the doctrine of Christ, for the Church is the Body of Christ, not the Body of the Spirit—it was not, after all, the Spirit but the Son who became incarnate and gave Himself for the Church and affianced it to Himself as His very own."[23] The Incarnation also serves to protect the Church against destructive dualisms. On the basis of the Nicene appeal to *homoousios* Torrance protests the ecclesiological dualism between the spiritual church and the visible church—a common "low church" emphasis—and a dualistic "distinction between a juridicial Society on the one hand, and a mystical body on the other hand"[24]—a common "high church" emphasis.

As a vital first step, therefore, Torrance suggests essential priorities for where ecclesiology fits in relation to the doctrine of the triune God. Elmer Colyer points out that "[i]n his two most important essays on ecclesiology [*The Trinitarian Faith*, chapters 6 and 7, and *Theology in Reconstruction*, chapter 3] Torrance develops the doctrine of the church in the context of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit."[25] Paul Molnar observes,

> Torrance's ecclesiology is shaped not only by a rigorous Chalecedonian Christology but by a profound Pneumatology, a rich doctrine of the Trinity and most importantly by an application once again of the Nicene *homoousion*. Just as all Christian doctrine hinges on Christ's internal relation to the Father as his eternal Son, so too does the very being of the church.[26]

A key distinguishing feature of Torrance's pneumatological approach to ecclesiology is how the Holy Spirit forms the Church through the Incarnation. Torrance observes,

> The Church is grounded in the Being and Life of God, and rooted in the eternal purpose of the Father to send his Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Head and Saviour of all things . . . God has not willed to live alone, but to create and seek others distinct from himself upon whom to pour out his Spirit, that he might share with them his divine life and glory, and as Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell in

22 Ibid., 18.

23 Ibid., 17.

24 T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark, 1997), 276.

25 Colyer, *How to Read T.F. Torrance,* 242.

26 Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance,* 273.

> their midst for ever.[27]
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> Because Jesus Christ through the Spirit dwells in the midst of the Church on earth, making it his own Body or his earthly and historical form of existence, it already partakes of the eternal life of God that freely flows out through him to all men.[28]

Thus, he shifts the focus of the Spirit's work within ecclesiology from phenomena or gifts to ontology, as through the Spirit God constitutes the Church in Jesus Christ.

In his care to keep the ecclesiological role of the Spirit oriented toward the Incarnate Son of God, Torrance offers two vital accompanying emphases. First, by keeping in view that the Spirit is intrinsically linked to Christ, the Spirit is not to be confused with either the human spirit or ecclesiastical structures. Second, we are then able to see the crucial ecclesiological role of the Spirit in communicating the free grace of God that cannot be bound to sacramental expressions.

> [T]he doctrine of the Spirit has its indispensable place, for when it is allowed to be superseded or dropped out of sight the Church comes to be more or less identified with a hierarchic institution operating with a false objectivity, and the whole conception of the Church as a communion of love, a fellowship of people living the reconciled life, is suppressed. It is the doctrine of the Spirit that inhibits the imprisoning of the life of the Church in a *codex iuris canonici*, that destroys the idea that the grace of God is bound to the sacramental elements, that makes impossible the conception that divine mysteries can be controlled and manipulated by man, and therefore that keeps the Church open to the renewal of its mind and lifts it above the downward drag of the spirit of the times.[29]

This pneumatological approach to ecclesiology distances Torrance from "high church" ecclesiologies that tend toward a sacramentalism or other forms of elevated ecclesiastical structures that essentially attempt to corral and control the grace of God.

Additionally, Torrance's pneumatological ecclesiology stands distinct from some "low church" ecclesiologies that appeal merely or primarily to the presence and work (if not the formal doctrine) of the Holy Spirit as the phenomenological validation of God's presence in their life together or that appeal to the shared

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27 Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1996), 192.

28 Ibid., 193.

29 Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, Vol. I, 18.

experience of the individuals who voluntarily assemble to constitute the Church.[30] Still, as Torrance anchors the reality of the Church in God, he acknowledges an essential human element that might be considered of a second order. He states, "The Church does not derive from below but from above, but it does not exist apart from the people that make up its membership or apart from the fellowship they have with the life of God."[31] In this sense Torrance reflects sympathies with "low church" concerns for the shared life of the gathered people of God and perhaps distances himself from ecclesiologies that disregard the reality and phenomena of the actual, gathered people of God—the fellowship of the saints—in favor of transcendent or historical criteria.

In what sense, then, can Torrance's ecclesiology be considered "high church"? Molnar points out that Torrance considered it legalistic to find "the church's oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity" in "the visible structure of the community."[32] Rather, for Torrance, the incarnational roots of the Body of Christ provide grounding for the physical, corporate nature of the church, the legitimacy of a bishopric of some sort, and his resistance to spiritualized, mystical, or quasi-docetic understandings of the Church. Through the Spirit, the Church draws life from its ascended Lord to live out that life as the Body of Christ within the structures of history, yet without being bound to those structures.[33] Still, for Torrance, the structural expressions of the Church within history—e.g., a bishopric—derive from his focus on the Spirit's mediation between the Church and its ascended Lord.

The intensely incarnational character of the Church as the Body of Christ, for Torrance, also forms the basis of his familiar "high church" emphasis on Word and Sacrament as definitive of the Church, particularly of its historical/empirical/visible existence as expressed through its ministry.

> [T]he Word and Sacraments in their inseparable unity span the whole life and mission of the Church in the last times inaugurated by Pentecost, holding together the First Coming with the Final Coming in the one *parousia* of Him who was, who is, and who is to come. It is therefore in terms of the Word and Sacraments that we are to articulate our understanding of the ministry of the Church, of its order and of the nature of its priesthood functioning through that

30 Emil Brunner argues a similar point, though in slightly different fashion. See his typology and critique in *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 10-16.

31 Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, 192.

32 Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance,* 268.

33 T. F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood: A Theology of Ordained Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 56, 59.

> order. An examination of the Biblical witness at this point makes it clear that the order of the Church is determined by the real presence of the Son of Man in Word and Sacrament, and that the priesthood of the Church, while distinct from the unique vicarious Priesthood of Christ, is nevertheless determined by the form of His Servant-existence on earth.[34]
>
> [I]t is the Apostolic tradition of the Holy Sacraments that enshrines the continuity of the Church's being in history, as St. Paul says: 'I have received of the Lord that which by tradition I delivered unto you' (. . . 1 Cor. 11.23), and he is speaking of the *traditio corporis* in the Lord's Supper which is the creative centre of the Church's continuity as Body of Christ. That is the Apostolic succession in the secondary sense, for it is through the Apostolic foundation that the corporeality of the Word is extended and mediated to a corporeal world by such physical, historical events as the Bible, Preaching, Sacraments, the physical society of the members of the Church, the historical communication and edification, and all that that entails from age to age.[35]

At the risk of creating confusion or misunderstanding by his choice of wording ("real presence"), Torrance anchors the Church's nature, structure, and mission incarnationally, while insisting that the Church never owns or conjures the life of Christ. On this point he observes,

> It belongs to the nature of the case that order in the Church which is the expression here and now of the coming Kingdom and is of the nature of the divine love, is not to be possessed, or is to be possessed only as the Spirit is possessed. The nature of the *charismata* is determined by the Spirit who is Himself both the *Giver* and the *Gift,* so that even as Gift He remains transcendent to the Church . . .[36]

Thus, the "high church" impulses and emphases of Torrance's ecclesiology, by being tethered to the Incarnation but mediated through the Spirit, exhibit another area of compatibility with conventional "low church" values—the freedom of the Spirit.

Torrance's "high church" ecclesiology also aligns with "low church" values in its missional character. This derives not only from his Christological grounding of the Church but, more specifically, from his insistence that in fulfilling God's covenant with Israel, Jesus Christ expressed the missional character of that covenant. "High church" ecclesiologies are commonly perceived (rightly or wrongly) as valuing unity and ecclesiastical structures in ways that functionally

34 Ibid., 63.

35 Ibid., 70.

36 Ibid., 66.

inhibit mission or at least do not naturally foster missional thinking. However, Torrance insists on both unity and mission by drawing attention to the identification of the early Church with the historic structures of the nation of Israel and the missional impetus seen in the spread of the gospel to the Gentile world.[37] He argues that the rootedness of the gospel in the nation of Israel provides the gospel's (and the Church's) missional character because that was Israel's original mandate.[38] This intrinsic missional character is coextensive with the intrinsic unity constituted by the Church's roots in God's covenant with Israel. This is the case, he asserts, despite the fact that the split between the Jewish and Gentile churches, exacerbated by the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., created a tension by allowing the Gentile churches to find institutional identity in the thought forms and worldviews of other cultures (Greek and Roman) rather than in the intrinsically missional nature of Israel's mandate to universalization.[39]

This brief profile illustrates how Torrance's animating theological commitments shaped his ecclesiology along recognizable "high church" lines while resonating with central values of "low church" ecclesiologies. At this point we turn to examine Ray Anderson's ecclesiology, particularly his appeal to Torrance's theological commitments and how he expressed them in a unique "low church" manner.

Key Features of Anderson's Ecclesiology

To describe Ray S. Anderson's ecclesiology as "low church" is, in one sense, to state the obvious. Accepting ordination by the Evangelical Free Church of America, Anderson subscribed to a congregational polity and a confessional/regenerate understanding of the nature of the Church.[40] Moreover, his

37 T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays Towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 25.

38 Ibid., 26.

39 Ibid., 27.

40 The EFCA Statement of Faith affirms, "The true Church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers." www.efca.org/explore/what-we-believe. Though this is the revised version of the EFCA Statement of Faith, adopted in 2008, these commitments were held at the time of Anderson's ordination. In addition to its Statement of Faith, the EFCA affirms six "distinctives". Distinctive #1 states, "The Evangelical Free Church of America is a believer's church—membership consists of those who have a personal faith in Jesus Christ." Distinctive #6 affirms the commitment to a congregational form of government.

longest tenured pastoral ministry was in a non-denominational congregation (Harbour Fellowship) that functioned even more autonomously than would an EFCA congregation. In this "low church" context Anderson implemented an ecclesiology that echoed key values of T. F. Torrance, taking the logic of Torrance's ecclesiological commitments beyond where Torrance took them.

Though the criteria of apostolicity factors overtly into Torrance's ecclesiological values, Anderson also makes that his ecclesiological starting point when he claims that "there is only one gospel and if any church is faithful to the gospel it is apostolic, regardless of what other distinctives it claims." Furthermore, "Christ is the chief apostle and . . . he continues to have a threefold apostolic ministry, which began in the first century and continues to this day."[41] According to Anderson, this understanding of apostolicity accounts for Protestantism's rejection of "'mechanical' succession of apostolic authority through the *office* of apostle, and grounded the apostolic nature of the church in the *message* of the apostles, that is, in the gospel to which the apostles gave witness."[42] Thus, for Anderson apostolicity does not primarily dictate ecclesiastical structure or practice, though those are not insignificant.

Perhaps surprisingly, Anderson considers himself a sacramentalist. In one of his more explicit statements he both explains his understanding of the sacramental nature of the church and links his view to Torrance.

> The Word of the gospel (*kerygma*) that the church proclaims, as Thomas Torrance has said, "is in the fullest sense the sacramental action of the Church through which the mystery of the Kingdom concerning Christ and His Church, hid from the foundation of the world, is now being revealed in history . . . in *kerygma* the same word continues to be 'made flesh' in the life of the church."
>
> The church's life is thus sacramental in the sense that it is the continuing life of the historical Jesus ministering to the world on behalf of God while, at the same time, the church is the eschatological presence of the coming Jesus Christ who has destroyed the power of death and gives assurance of resurrection and forgiveness through the Holy Spirit.[43]

In response to Anderson's remark, Christian Kettler observes that to Anderson, "The issue . . . is not whether we are 'sacramental,' but are we sacramental

41 Ray S. Anderson, *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 147.

42 Anderson, *Ministry on the Fireline*, 121.

43 Anderson, *The Soul of Ministry*, 170. Anderson's citation of Torrance is from T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church*, vol. 2, *The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel* (London: Lutterworth, 1960), 158-159.

enough?"[44] Not encumbered by traditional "low church" misgivings with sacramental theology and terminology, Anderson unapologetically draws his understanding of sacramentalism directly from the Incarnation and the fact that the Incarnation anchors the *kerygma*.

Kettler points out that Anderson borrows from Barth (whose influence is clearly felt through Torrance) to insist that the presence of Christ, based on his humanity, is the primary sacrament, *contra* traditions that insist on the sacraments being linked to the practices of the church. In this regard, Kettler suggests that Christ's kenotic presence, as constituting the community he creates, was perhaps "Anderson's most important contribution to ecclesiology."[45] Thus, a central question about Anderson's ecclesiology turns out to be the *type* of sacramentalism he represents, and how he works this out within an ostensibly "low church" context.

Like Torrance, Anderson understands the role of the Holy Spirit as integral and not ancillary to the incarnational nature of the Church. Yet the Spirit is not the ecclesiastical possession of the church. He states,

The praxis of Pentecost begins its theological reflection from the perspective of this paracletic ministry of the Spirit of Christ taking place in the world before it takes place in the church. That is to say, Christ is not first of all contained by the nature of the church so that only when Christ is shared by the church does the world encounter him. Rather, as Thomas Torrance has put it, "Christ clothed with His gospel meets with Christ clothed with the desperate needs of men."

> This paracletic ministry of Jesus, of course, presupposes the kerygma as the announcement of this act of reconciliation. But even as the incarnation provides the basis for the kerygma in the humanity of Jesus Christ as the ground of reconciliation, so the continued humanity of Christ provided the ground for the paracletic ministry of the Holy Spirit and the kerygmatic message.[46]

In the following, Anderson underscores the ecclesiological implications of this point that the church must not be over-associated with the presence or mission of God in any sense that would imply control or power over the work of God.

Theology loses contact with the praxis of God when it seeks to ground its

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44 Christian D. Kettler, *Reading Ray S. Anderson: Theology as Ministry, Ministry as Theology* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 99-100.

45 Ibid., 99-100.

46 Anderson, *Ministry on the Fireline*, 65. Anderson's citation of Torrance is from Thomas F. Torrance, "Service in Jesus Christ," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, ed. Ray S. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 724.

> existence in some kind of continuity with a natural right or law, even when these natural laws become supportive of its religion. There is nothing so destructive to the humanity of persons as a theology of the church that fuses race, religion and political theory. At the same time there is nothing so contemporary, compelling and downright dangerous to such deadly orthodoxy as the humanity of God unleashed as the mission of Christ in the world. The humanity of God in Jesus Christ, his birth, life, death and resurrection, is both the "personalising of persons" and the "humanising of man," as T. F. Torrance once put it.[47]

Anderson's insistence on the freedom of the Spirit to work out the incarnational/kerygmatic character of ministry without being bound to ecclesiastical structures constitutes one of his most salient extensions of Torrance's ecclesiological influence within his own "low church" context.

Anderson develops the ecclesiastical implications of this ecclesiological framework in his book *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (2006). Ironically, this work draws upon the ecclesiological foreshadowing of a chapter entitled "An Emerging Church" in *Ministry on the Fireline* (1993), which was written before the "Emerging Church" was a popular, recognizable cultural reality in the U.S. Whether or not Anderson knew about the nascent "Emerging Church" movement when he published his earlier chapter, he explicitly draws that line of thought forward to provide validation and theological grounding for the movement in his later book. In *An Emergent Theology* Anderson makes perhaps his most direct use of Torrance to offer an ecclesiological justification of the Emerging Church movement.

How Torrance would have assessed the "Emerging Church" is interesting to consider. One suspects that with the value Torrance placed on history and continuity, he may have been rather uncomfortable with the openness and seemingly unanchored creativity of this particular ecclesiastical trend. Yet, Anderson appeals to Torrance's ecclesiological values to provide a theological defense of the phenomenon.

> Emerging churches do not need well-defined boundaries because they have a real presence of Christ at the center. This again reveals the fact that it is about the right gospel, not the right polity. Where Christ is not clearly visible as the life of the community of faith, the boundary lines tend to be become [sic] more visible, often to the exclusion of those who are themselves ambiguous with regard to their spiritual identity. Emerging churches will often be a little messy

47 Ibid., 171. Anderson's citation of Torrance is from Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*, new ed. (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992), 78-79.

> around the edges—like the original followers of Jesus—but Christ can handle that![48]

Torrance's emphasis on the character of grace as killing in order to make alive provides Anderson with a defense of the ecclesiastical messiness of "Emerging" churches. "[W]hat grace puts to death is what we create by our own religion based on a human and natural law, which the law of God reveals as inhuman and enslaving."[49]

Anderson draws on Torrance even more pointedly in the following assessment:

> I have the feeling that the emerging church appears a bit naked to those who see it unencumbered by the traditional institutional forms and polity of the church. The vestments of the pastoral office, though often vibrant with color, may still carry the musty odor of the tomb. The gospel is not really naked, but clothed with Christ in the form of human need and human aspirations. Thomas Torrance says it eloquently when he writes:
>
> "The Church cannot be in Christ without being in Him as He is proclaimed to men in their need and without being in Him as He encounters us in and behind the existence of every man in his need. Nor can the Church be recognized as His except in that meeting of Christ with Himself in the depth of human misery, where Christ clothed with His Gospel meets with Christ clothed with the desperate need and plight of men."[50]

The incarnational constitution of the church appears once again as central in Torrance's thought and echoes the broader character of Anderson's theological interest in the revelatory nature of the Incarnation. More specifically, Anderson regards the entrance of the Son of God into human brokenness as an almost irreducibly poignant act of reconciliation and revelation.[51]

Reflecting Torrance, Anderson also makes ecclesiological appeal to the work of the Spirit in his apologetic for the "Emerging Church." He cites Torrance in two key passages; the first emphasizes that the Spirit's primary goal is to build a Christ-shaped community and not primarily to effect certain individualistic

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48 Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 89.

49 Anderson, *Emergent Theology*, 89-90.

50 Ibid., 93. Anderson's citation of Torrance is from "Service in Jesus Christ," in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, 724.

51 See for example his published PhD thesis. Ray S. Anderson, *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God: A Christological Critique* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) and "The Little Man on the Cross," *The Reformed Journal* (November 1982): 14-17.

interior states.[52] Second, he relies on Torrance to make the point that "The community of the Spirit is formed by the charism, or gift, of the Holy Spirit and thus can be called a charismatic community. The body of Christ becomes the corporate manifestation of this life in Christ; the fruit of the Spirit becomes our personal manifestation of this life in Christ."[53]

This modest sampling illustrates Torrance's influence on Anderson's ecclesiology, though far more examples of Anderson's direct and indirect reliance on Torrance could be cited. At this point the focus must shift to what has already been mentioned, but not yet explored—the intriguing difference between the ecclesiastical expression of their respective ecclesiologies: "high church" and "low church." What accounts for this difference when Anderson draws on Torrance so frequently and enthusiastically?

Comparative Analysis

Features of Torrance's and Anderson's ecclesiologies considered thus far raise important questions for both ecclesiology and theological method. What differences exist between their ecclesiologies, or at least between the ways they utilize a common theological framework, and what is the significance of those differences? What accounts for the ways in which Anderson adapts or modifies Torrance's ecclesiological paradigm for a "low church" context? Does Anderson's use of Torrance's ecclesiological paradigm expose any inconsistencies with the trajectory of thought for either? What can we learn from this comparison about the process of theological development?

Torrance's ecclesiology may differ from Anderson's most obviously in how Torrance viewed the nature and significance of ecclesiastical structure, most notably perhaps with regard to the role of ordination in the administration of the Eucharist. He elaborates on this role and the theological background for it in *Royal Priesthood*, making clear how his view differs from a sacramentalism that understands the Eucharist as possessed or controlled by the Church. Rather, he insists that the Eucharist is subordinate to the risen and ascended Christ, who by the Spirit ministers himself to the Church.[54] "Because the Sacraments are Sacraments of the Word made flesh, they are nothing apart from the Word . . ."[55] The Apostolic ministry of the Word then becomes pivotal in the life of the Church,

52 Anderson, *Emergent Theology*, 165.

53 Ibid., 167. Here Anderson cites Torrance from *Theology in Reconstruction*, 247.

54 Torrance, *Royal Priesthood*, 71.

55 Ibid., 75.

both originally and as iterated in a designated clerical order.

> [T]he Apostles occupied a unique position as the foundation of the Church, for it was through them that the Mind of Christ came to be articulated in the Church as divine Word in human form and yet prior to, and transcendent to, the Church. Hence the Apostles always come first in the Pauline lists of the *charismata* (Eph. 4.11; I Cor. 12.29, etc.). But within the Church the ministry of the Word, through evangelists who establish congregations or through prophets and teachers who build them up in the faith, occupies the primary place, for it is the ministry of Word that continues to beget and maintain the Church, and it is the proclamation of the Word to the Church which effectively forms it as the Body of Christ and preserves it as Body from usurping the place and authority of the Head . . . [I]t is as the Word becomes event in the sacramental ordinances that the Church as Body takes shape and form under the ordering of the Word of the ascended Head. As such the Sacraments mean the enactment of the authority of Christ over the Church and its life and ministry, and so the ministry of the Word and Sacraments involves a *charisma* of oversight (ἐπισκωπή) over the whole congregation and its worship, in which the unity of Word and Sacrament, and the proper relation of Sacrament to the Word may be maintained in the Church which is the Body united to Christ as its Head. Thus an *episcopos* presides over the fellowship of the Church by exercising the ministry of Word and Sacrament, but in such a manner that he is to be accounted a *steward* (οἰκονόμος) of the mysteries of God and an able minister (ὑπηρέτης) of the Spirit (I Cor. 4.1f; cf. 2 Cor. 4.1ff).[56]

Such charismatic ordering, Torrance argues, exists in continuity with and as an extension of the priestly role in the Old Testament, a significant aspect of which was the filling of the priest's hands with consecrated offerings. Torrance pulls this particular thread through to weave his theology of ordination. This filling of the priest's hands "came to be the most distinctive term for ordination, for it was in this part of the rite that the priest's consecration was brought to its fulfilment as he engaged in the sacrificial oblations for the first time."[57] After developing this line of argument further, Torrance concludes, "Out of this there arises very properly a theology of ordination in which the climax, so to speak, of the rite of ordination is reached, not in the laying on of hands . . . but in the actual celebration of the Eucharist. It is as *Christ fills the hands* of the presbyter with the bread and wine that his ordination is properly realised and validated."[58]

Anderson's comfort with the looser ecclesiastical practices of the "Emerging

56 Ibid., 76-77.

57 Ibid., 79.

58 Ibid., 80-81.

Church" suggests that he may not have held as strictly to some particulars of Torrance's views on ordination and the administration of the sacraments as he did to other aspects of Torrance's ecclesiology.[59] He defends the model of leadership present in that ecclesial model by appealing to 2 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Paul's argument that the Corinthian converts, the fruit of his ministry, were the only validation he needed for his ministry. Anderson concludes,

> The emerging churches founded by Paul were not led by credentialed elders, nor did Paul train others to assume leadership roles, except with the possible cases of Timothy and Titus, for example. And even here, if Timothy was sent to give leadership to the church at Ephesus, as some think, his "credentialing" was not by an ordination certificate but by "the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6). Paul's confidence in the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ to provide instruction, guidance and leadership for the emerging churches was bold and uncompromising, even though it sometimes led to some degree of confusion and even disorder. Despite all that, Paul did not write to the churches (at Corinth, for example), telling them to replace the leadership of the Spirit with a more top-down ecclesial system of authority. On the contrary, he simply reminded them that the unity of the Spirit and the mind of Christ given by the Spirit were to be sought by consensus.[60]

Later in his theological reflection on the "Emerging Church" Anderson revisits the issue of ordination to argue for the ordination of women on the same pneumatological basis, i.e., that the validation of the Spirit constitutes the defining stamp of approval on a person's ministry.[61]

The nature and administration of the Eucharist provides an equally illuminating example of Anderson's ecclesial latitude with Torrance's framework. Anderson's open view would be disturbing or at least seem odd to those across the high-low ecclesiastical spectrum. Anyone familiar with Anderson's corpus and his personal pastoral practice knows that he advocates an "open table." However, for him "open" does not simply mean open to Christians of other denominations or

59 Both Torrance and Anderson supported the ordination of women. Torrance argued this case by anchoring ordained ministry in the scope of Christ's incarnation and atonement. See Thomas F. Torrance, "The Ministry of Women," in *Gospel, Church, and Ministry*, Thomas F. Torrance Collected Studies 1, ed. Jock Stein (Eugene: Pickwick, 2012), 201-219. Anderson also argued for the ordination of women, contending that the church should follow the trajectory of human community that was launched by the Resurrection, is propelled by the Spirit, and anticipates full realization in the eschaton. See Ray S. Anderson, "The Resurrection of Jesus as Hermeneutical Criterion: A Case for Sexual Parity in Pastoral Ministry," in *TSF Bulletin* 9:4 (March/April, 1986): 15-20.

60 Anderson, *Emergent Theology*, 72-73.

61 Ibid., 128-131.

congregations. It means open to believer and non-believer alike, considering the Lord's Table an invitation to experience God's grace. He states, "The essence of sacrament may be defined as a gracious invitation to participate in the life of God along with a gracious impartation of a spiritual benefit."[62] Essentially, Anderson sees the Eucharist functioning not primarily as a sign of the covenant for those who have already had their membership ratified by baptism or by prior confession of faith, but for those in need of covenant grace. This move seems curiously in keeping with the impulses of Torrance's Christological sacramentalism, but extends it beyond what Torrance might have practiced.

Torrance appeals to Israel's role in a manner that may have set the direction for Anderson's practice of an open table. "[B]ecause the election of Israel as God's Servant was the election of man in his sinful existence and enmity to God, election involved the judgment of man in his will to isolate himself from God and in his refusal of grace."[63] Possibly Anderson draws on Torrance's notion of election, with its more inclusive, corporate character as the basis of the Church, as the basis for his more inclusive approach to the Eucharist. Anderson is fond of using Torrance's notion of the "inner logic" of the gospel. Most likely, he would contend that this is exactly what he follows in his Eucharistic practice.

Why does Anderson not work out the ecclesiological implications of his Christology in the same fashion as did Torrance? Several possibilities can be considered. Perhaps he is not as convinced as Torrance that the character and trajectory of the Old Testament priesthood establishes the structure or order for the Church. Without question Anderson appeals to the liturgical and ecclesiological significance of Israel, much as Torrance does.

> In a certain sense . . . Israel as the people of God renders a service to God on behalf of all the nations. Thus Israel is a *leitourgos*, offering up to God in the name of all human creatures that which properly belongs to him. But Israel, of course, must be saved herself; and thus Jesus Christ, as the one Israelite appointed and anointed for that service, renders to God the service that is appropriate. Consequently, Jesus is call the *leitourgos* (minister) who serves in the sanctuary of God (Heb. 8:2). He is the liturgist, who chooses the fields, the shops, and the streets as his sanctuary in which to render service to God. As the incarnate Son of God, he takes humanity and brings it back to its appropriate serviceableness to the Creator.[64]

62 Ibid., 216.

63 Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, 197.

64 Ray S. Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Pasadena: Fuller Seminary, 1982), 181.

However, here Anderson takes Torrance's premises and develops their logic in ways that fit or reflect both his "low church" church context and his understanding of the nature of the Church and its ministry as constituted by the Incarnate Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps Anderson sees more hermeneutical significance in the role of the Spirit to grant the Church freedom in working out the implications of the Resurrection through fresh adaptations to the actuality of human brokenness and need. In comparison, Torrance seems to see the ecclesial role of the Spirit more (though not exclusively) along the contours of the OT priestly role. Furthermore, while Torrance emphasizes the work of the Spirit to mediate between the ascended Christ and his Body within the structures of history, Anderson seems to place more emphasis on the Spirit's role in working out the character of the coming eschatological order in the present order, often apart from the structures of the Church. His view that there is a "secular" expression of sacramentalism loosens the work of the Spirit from being bound to the structures of the Church and fixes that work on the humanity of Christ as expressed to all people through the Incarnation. Both possibilities (and there may be others) are congruent with the theological and methodological rationale for ministry that Anderson presents in his key works.[65]

What might be the significance of these moves on Anderson's part? Interestingly, the significance may be found in how both Anderson and Torrance appeal to different aspects of the same Christological paradigm. For each, the Resurrection is more than an apologetic stamp of validation or a decisive completion of Christ's redeeming work (though no less than those). For Anderson the Resurrection constitutes a methodological construct that, through the Spirit of the Risen Christ, opens fresh and creative possibilities for ministry as long as those possibilities were tethered to proper theological "antecedents."[66] A key difference between Torrance's "high church" ecclesiology and Anderson's "low church" ecclesiology is the way in which each connects

65 In *Ministry on the Fireline* and *The Soul of Ministry* his notion of "ministry as theology" (which phrase also appears in the subtitle of Christian Kettler's *Reading Ray S. Anderson*) constitutes his central methodological commitment that the realities of ministry practice have a vital hermeneutical role for the shaping of theological affirmations. Earlier in his career he made a similar case, appealing to the eschatological orientation of the Spirit's work in order to argue for women in ministry. See Anderson, "The Resurrection of Jesus as Hermeneutical Criterion".

66 Anderson refers to the concept of biblical "antecedents" as a hermeneutical safeguard against ungrounded interpretive moves in the name of the Spirit and the eschaton. See *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 109-112.

the Incarnation ontologically to the Church's sacramental practices and its organized life together. Anderson either shifts or extends the emphases of Torrance's Christo-ecclesial paradigm in way(s) that fit a "low church" context, even if his adaptations exist on the fringes of what would be acceptable to many other "low church" contexts.

Anderson's adaptations of Torrance's ecclesial paradigm allow him to function with the latitude of "low church" ecclesiastical settings and be a theological advocate for movements like the Emerging Church, while also incorporating certain sacramental motifs typically found in "high church" settings. Hence, he is able to describe Harbour Fellowship as "the high of low churches." He is unashamedly sacramental, as defined by his theological paradigm.

> A theology of sacrament can be expressed as a twofold movement: a gracious invitation to participate in the community of God's inner life as spiritual beings, and a gracious impartation of divine blessing on our life as human beings. Human life therefore might be considered as a secular sacrament through which gracious access to the Creator enables humans to serve as priests of creation, offering up praise and thanksgiving to him. At the same time, humans represent a gracious blessing from the Creator on the secular workplace, thus fulfilling the very nature of sacrament itself.[67]

This framework for sacramentalism serves as the platform for a more specific understanding of sacramentalism with respect to the Church.

> [Paul] did not bind grace to sacrament but sacrament to grace . . . Grace is not a commodity that can be packaged and dispensed. It is the life of the Spirit that renews and transforms every facet of both the inner and outer life of those who belong to Christ . . . There is no suggestion in Paul's rebuke and instructions that the problem was in the act of dispensing the elements of bread and wine that represent the body and blood of Jesus. The sacramental act is participation in the meal itself, not in a ritual of administration.
>
> We should understand that the grace of sacrament is Jesus himself, who unites the real presence of God with humanity in his own person. He is the primary sacrament from which all sacramental life flows and has its origin . . . Our need does not cause the grace of God to be dispensed for us, but God's grace in our lives brings us to the altar. Grace lives on both sides of the altar, at both ends of the Table of the Lord.[68]

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67 Anderson, *Emergent Theology*, 104. See his development of this theme with application to the caregiving professions in *Spiritual Caregiving as Secular Sacrament: A Practical Theology for Professional Caregivers* (New York: Jessica Kingsley, 2003).

68 Ibid., 215-216. For both Anderson and Torrance, the notion that grace is person and not a discrete, ontological entity can be traced back to Karl Barth in his treatment of the

> To be a truthful church is to make the truth of Christ an incarnational reality that is present in the world and to the world as the very presence of Christ.[69]

Clearly, then, Anderson understands sacramentalism not primarily in terms of particular ecclesiastical practices or objects but as invitation and expression of God's grace, expressed generally through creation and specifically through the Incarnation in the experience of God's people.

What accounts for Anderson's adaptations of Torrance's ecclesiological paradigm for a "low church" context? Why does he so frequently cite Torrance on ecclesiological matters to argue for "low church" ecclesiological values which Torrance likely would have questioned? By his own admission Anderson works out a theology of ministry in which the act of ministry itself plays a central role in his theological method. He frequently admits that his ministry experiences profoundly reshaped his theological method in that direction. He brings that reservoir of experiential resources with him into his doctoral studies with Torrance and we can easily surmise that they provide an epistemological framework for his interpretation of Torrance throughout his career. The possible significance of Anderson's U.S. context should not be overlooked. Due to multiple socio-political features of U.S. culture, "low church" values have been particularly easy to perpetuate. Whatever factors may be identified in Anderson's ecclesiological adaptations, he provides an illuminating case study for the influence of ministry practice and context in theological development. It is not without significance in this regard that Anderson describes Torrance as a "practical theologian."[70]

One's theological starting point wields considerable influence on theological conclusions by establishing a trajectory. Yet, by definition a trajectory is not destination. Thus, it is impossible to predict, at least exhaustively or precisely, where a trajectory will lead. Sometimes the trajectory makes more sense when viewed in the "rear view mirror" from the vantage point of a destination. This phenomenon can be observed in the influence of Torrance's ecclesiology on Anderson, though the former worked out his ecclesiology in a more "high church" context and the latter in a more "low church" context. Two possible implications surface.

First, in ecclesiology other theological commitments come together, often in complex ways. Ecclesiology can be considered a laboratory or case study for understanding the ways in which other theological commitments are held, how they are related to each other, and how they are worked out in life and ministry.

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doctrine of election. See Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, II.2.

69 Ibid., 217.

70 Anderson, "The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance," 49.

Second, the trajectories established by theological starting points are themselves like complex cables that contain more facets and implications than adherents understand. In the case of Torrance and Anderson, this may be an example of what they loved to quote from one of their favorite epistemologists, Michael Polanyi, "You know more than you can tell." Torrance's theology of the Incarnation and the vicarious humanity of Christ shape Anderson's understanding of the sacramental character of the Church. In a sense, Anderson uses this theme and the broader context of Trinitarian relations to redefine sacramentalism, pointing to community as "[t]he fundamental liturgical paradigm of personhood," then going on to claim that "liturgy takes place as a fundamental expression of God as a fellowship of being."[71]

This approach to sacramentalism actually illustrates the first implication by showing the interconnectedness of ecclesiology and anthropology for Anderson. In the liturgical community human personhood as "co-humanity" is "enacted," "re-enacted," "reaffirmed, supported, and reinforced" through participation in the reality of triune, divine community.[72] It would be not over-reaching to suggest that for Anderson the church re-humanizes as it worships! Kettler's astute observation is worth repeating. For Anderson, he states, "The issue, then, is not whether we are 'sacramental,' but are we sacramental *enough*?"[73]

Conclusion

Ray Anderson's overall approach to the theological task decidedly bears the imprint of his theological mentor T. F. Torrance. Readers cannot get far into Anderson's corpus without seeing frequent citations of Torrance and noticing how deeply Anderson's thought is shaped by Torrance. Torrance's influence on Anderson's ecclesiology presents, however, a curious and intriguing example of that influence since Torrance's ecclesiology is expressed along the lines of several traditionally understood "high church" values, while Anderson's ecclesiology clearly follows conventional contours of "low church" values. At points they obviously go in what seem to be different ecclesiological directions. Interestingly, they follow these different directions—"high church" and "low church"—from similar theological starting points and yet find their way to conclusions that harmonize.

They share a commitment to the Incarnation as an ecclesiological starting

71 Anderson, *On Being Human*, 182.

72 Ibid., 182-183.

73 Kettler, *Reading Ray S. Anderson*, 99.

point and benchmark that determines the place of the Church in and for the brokenness of humanity. They share a commitment to the role of the Holy Spirit as the divine agent who works out the incarnational character of the Church in the current order, yet in ways that keep the Church from being bound to or owned by the current order. In their respective and distinctive approaches to these common commitments, Torrance and Anderson make nuanced theological moves that allow each to situate those commitments within diverse ecclesiastical contexts. These moves are not incompatible but do illustrate the methodological significance of placing differing levels of emphasis on different theological motifs and of connecting those motifs in different ways.

T. F. Torrance and his student Ray S. Anderson continue, posthumously, to nourish the theological world through their theological legacies, both in print and in oral tradition. Even without offering comprehensive and systematic ecclesiologies, each gives noteworthy attention to that area of Christian doctrine. Studied separately, their ecclesiologies can be seen to reflect the values and impulses of their broader theological frameworks. Since their frameworks are so similar—Anderson drawing much of his from Torrance—students of each can hardly help but notice how those frameworks find unique expression in "high church" and "low church" contexts. Yet, even those differences never take center stage but ultimately reside in the shadows of their compelling commitment to the incarnate, risen, and ascended Lord whose life the Church enjoys through the Holy Spirit, and whose Spirit relentlessly breaks through barriers, structures, and religious forms with the shocking grace of the Kingdom of God.

T. F. TORRANCE AND APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

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ABSTRACT: *This article seeks to set forth and explore the theological architecture of T. F. Torrance's conception of the church's life, ministry, orders, and continuity. Relying primarily on Torrance's earlier work in the ecumenical movement, we seek to sketch his remarkably integrated, biblical-theological and, crucially, Christological, and thus eschatological, presentation. This will entail an account of the incarnate Christ crucified, now risen, ascended, and coming again, and of the church as the pneumatically formed body of this Christ. This structurally primitive frame creates the "time of the church" in which her relation to the apostolic foundation, her priestly ministry of Word and Sacrament, and her orders and continuity can be expounded. Out of this positive theology will emerge, at nearly every point, Torrance's sharp critique of historically held notions of ecclesial continuity or apostolic succession.*[1]

I. The Christological Correction: Christological Eschatology

For Torrance, the proper theological procedure for dealing with the doctrine of the church is to start with the doctrine of Christ.[2] This means, in addressing the divisions in the church, "we must wrestle with the profound issues of Christology and Soteriology."[3] Although Chalcedon rightly defined the doctrine of Christ, the church before the Reformation[4] had not carried out a "Christological correction

1 Realizing that there are competing conceptions of apostolic succession, we shall use a general definition: A continuous ministerial succession, usually episcopal, which, whether by divine right or hallowed tradition, can be used to identify and secure the church's continuity in history, and to guarantee the validity and fidelity of her orders, sacraments, and, in some cases, her dogmatic pronouncements.

2 T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church: Volume I: Order and Disorder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 12.

3 *CAC I,* 13.

4 "Indeed the whole movement of the Reformation may well be regarded as a Christological criticism of the notions of Church, Ministry, and Sacraments as they had developed…in strange detachment from the high Christology of Nicea and Chalcedon."

in the form of the ministry and the shape of the liturgy."[5] Torrance often sees this "correction" as an analogous, second-order application of Chalcedonian Christology to ecclesiology. For example:

> [A]s in Christ the divine nature and the human nature are hypostatically united in one Person without separation and without confusion, so in a parallel way and on another level the Church is united to Christ through a personal relation of communion *(koinonia)* in which Christ and His Church are neither to be separated from one another nor to be confused with one another.[6]

> More basically, when the hypostatic union is given "an analogical extension into the sphere of the Church," the analogy is not "as God and Man are related in Christ so the divine and the human are related in the Church," but rather "as God and Man are related in Christ so Christ and the Church are related."[7]

Whatever one thinks of the Chalcedonian analogy and its various deployments, we hope to demonstrate that it is the resurrection, the ascension, the gift of the Spirit, and the Parousia which are doing the theological heavy lifting and not Chalcedonian orthodoxy *per se.*[8] The *sui generis* character of the God-man makes these types of analogies treacherous,[9] and while Torrance will invoke them, the bulk of his "Christological correction" lies more in an exposition of the *loci* we have indicated. For our purposes this entails a rigorous outworking of what it means for the church to be the body of the crucified, now risen, ascended, and advent Christ. Put differently, the Christological correction Torrance carries out is pervasively eschatological.

We take as programmatic for our task Torrance's statement that "eschatology

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CAC I, 230. Ibid., 79.

5 Ibid., 37.

6 Ibid., 110.

7 Ibid., 202-203, 231, 246.

8 This is true even given Torrance's dynamic reconstruction of the (static Chalcedonian) hypostatic union to entail the whole historical life of Christ. See T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 201, 204; *CAC I,* 240. Even on Torrance's expansive reading of the hypostatic union, it is unveiled as perfected at the resurrection. Thus, while the atonement would be the "hypostatic union at work," consideration of the resurrection, the ascension, the gift of the Spirit, and the Parousia would be fruits which repose upon the hypostatic union and not constitutive aspects of the union itself.

9 Not only are they analogies of things on different levels of being (Christ and the church), but one could ask if the comparisons are not more illustrative of difference than similarity.

is simply a thoroughgoing application of Christology to history."[10] The supreme importance of eschatology is obscured when it is divorced from the doctrine of Christ.[11] It is in this "Christological Eschatology"[12] that "the deepest difference between 'protestant' and 'catholic' theology in regard to the church is to be found."[13] Indeed, "if the doctrines of Christ and the Church have themselves suffered from arrested development in the Reformed Churches that is undoubtedly due to the failure to think eschatology into the whole."[14] The whole of the church's life and ministry is eschatological because, dogmatically speaking, the Christological frame in which she exists as the body of the *eschatos Adam* is intrinsically eschatological. Thus, Christological eschatology is the form that Christological correction of the church takes. Describing Barth's giving up of a timeless eschatology thought of in terms of an eternity/time dialectic for a more faithful New Testament understanding, he writes:

> Here the whole content of eschatology is thought through Christologically in terms of the incarnation, the God-manhood of Christ, and the events of the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. In this way eschatology is nothing but a thoroughgoing expression of the doctrine of grace as it concerns history, while the important word is not *eschaton* (the last event) but *Eschatos* (the last one).[15]

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10 *CAC I,* 63. This is history understood in terms of Christ as the First (*protos*) and Last (*eschatos*). Torrance attributes this same view of the relation of eschatology to Christology to Calvin. *CAC I,* 98, T. F. Torrance, "The Eschatology of the Reformation," in *Eschatology: Four Papers Read to The Society for the Study of Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1952), 58. A fuller statement is "eschatology properly speaking is the application of Christology to the Kingdom of Christ and to the work of the church in history." T. F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood: A Theology of Ordained Ministry* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 43.

11 *CAC I,* 99.

12 The term is Torrance's coinage. Ibid., 227. We note here that Torrance's eschatology as a whole has been examined recently. See Stanley S. MacLean, *Resurrection, Apocalypse, and the Kingdom of Christ: The Eschatology of T. F. Torrance* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012). This is, the author says in the introduction, a "more historical-descriptive than analytical-descriptive" work. Torrance's eschatology is studied here in its unfolding historical order. We are, in this paper, trying to do something quite different. We are arguing that Torrance has constructed a mini-dogmatics of ecclesial continuity and seeking to understand its internal order.

13 *CAC I,* 63. The eschatological element was "thoroughly purged from Catholicism at Trent." Ibid., 56.

14 Ibid., 201.

15 *Incarnation,* 309. Note that here the Chalcedonian union of God and man is not exclusive but concatenated with the other *loci* which will concern us. On the *eschaton/ Eschatos* distinction see T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time, and Resurrection* (Edinburgh: T&T

Let us turn to a consideration of the frame this Christological eschatology creates for ecclesial reflection.

II. Christological Eschatology: The Body of Christ and the Spirit

The church is the body of Christ. This is, for Torrance, "no mere image or metaphor . . . it is essential reality," which the other images of the church enrich and serve.[16] The body analogy is the "the most deeply Christological of them all, and refers us directly to Christ Himself as the Head and Savior of the Body." This is highlighted by the use of "body" at the inauguration of the Supper as a term which applies to both Christ and the church.[17] Among other things, its value lies in directing our focus away from the church as a "sociological or anthropological magnitude," or an "institution or a process," directing us rather to the church "as the immediate property of Christ which He has made His very own and gathered into the most intimate relation with Himself."[18]

Critically, this means "Christ is Himself the essence of the Church, its *Esse.* That fact immediately relativizes and makes ultimately unimportant the endless and tiresome discussions about what is of the *esse* or the *bene esse* or the *plene esse* of the Church."[19] The church, then, is not an "independent hypostatic reality," and we must formulate our doctrine of her as "His body, and His servant, not in any sense an *alter Christus.*"[20]

Formulating this entails rejecting any cleavage between an "ontological" and an "eschatological" view of the church.[21] For, as his body, the church is an "ontological reality, enhypostatic in Christ and wholly dependent on Him."[22]

Clark, 1976), 151-52.

16 *CAC I,* 230, 238.

17 Ibid., 105, 220.

18 Ibid., 106.

19 Ibid. Alternatively, "Christ clothed with His Gospel is the essence of the Church." Ibid., 107.

20 Ibid., 15-16.

21 Ibid., 249.

22 Ibid., 248. Torrance uses, with caution and analogically, the an-enhypostasia couplet historically used in Christology, with respect to the church. Here *anhypostasia* means the church has "no independent *hypostasis* [personal existence – KC], apart from atonement and communion through the Holy Spirit." *Enhypostasia* would mean the church is given real personal existence through incorporation into Christ. *Anhypostasia* accents the church as eschatological event, *enhypostasia* accents ontological reality. On the analogical and ontological nature of the "body" metaphor, see *Royal Priesthood,* 29-30.

The danger of thinking primarily in terms of ontological incorporation into the incarnate One is that "we tend to entertain the false conception of the church as a *Christus prolongatus* or an extension of the Incarnation."[23] The church's "real and substantial union," ontological union, is fully eschatological, for it is union "with the Risen, Ascended, and Advent Lord."[24] It is important, at this point, to see that, while the church does have a relation to the historical Jesus, it is a relation that exists always and only on the other side of the resurrection, the ascension, and the gift of the Spirit:

> The relation between Christ and His Church is the *irreversible* relation between the Head of the Body and the members of the Body. That relation of irreversibility belongs to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit through whom alone the church is given to participate in Christ and be His Body, and through whom the Church is given continued being only as the servant of the Lord.[25]

As such, this relation exists in an eschatological frame:

> The relation between Christ and His Church is the relation between the First-Born of the new creation and the body which still awaits redemption, although sealed by His Spirit and given an earnest of its inheritance yet to be revealed.[26]

This means that the relationship between Christ and the church "is to be formulated in terms of the doctrine of the Spirit and Eschatology."[27] Pneumatology, then, is the inner substance of Christological eschatology for it is through the Spirit that the church becomes the body of Christ between the penultimate and ultimate acts of redemptive history.[28] Put differently, in forming the church as the body of Christ, the Spirit engenders a relationship of *koinonia* which is neither one of identity with Christ nor pure difference:

> It is a *sui generis* relation grounded upon the act of the Trinity in Christ Jesus, and is manifest in the Church. It is upon this that the eschatological relation in

23 *CAC I,* 249. By "extension" of the incarnation Torrance means a linear, historical extension.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., 232-33. This irreversibility means the church is a predicate of Christ, never the reverse. Ibid., 184, 247.

26 Ibid., 233.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 17. "All the mighty acts of God have taken place in Christ, and we await only His final Parousia; the Church lives between the penultimate and the ultimate acts of the *Heilgeschichte.*"

> the New Testament is also grounded: the very relation that forms the content of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.[29]

The eschatological Spirit then, and not any "divinizing of the human element," may be spoken of as the "divine nature" of the church. More precisely, it is by the Spirit of the risen Christ, the head of the church, the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18),[30] that Christ functions as the only divine element in the church.[31] The Spirit alone, and not the apostles or bishops, is the *Shaliach*, the personal representative who is the very presence of Christ, the Gift which is identical with the Giver.[32]

Where the role of the Spirit is "superseded or dropped out of sight the church comes to be more or less identified with a hierarchic institution operating with a false objectivity."[33] To identify personally the apostle-bishop, and not the Spirit, with Christ Himself, is to forget that the Spirit is both Giver and Gift, and it runs the danger of treating the Spirit as something which can be passed on, thus "unbending" the Spirit's relation to the church into a straight line, and turning eschatology into temporal succession.[34]

The Spirit, poured out by the church's ascended head and Lord, inhibits the imprisonment of the church's life in a *codex iurus canonici*, lifts it up, and directs it away from itself to find its true life and being in Christ above.[35] Even as gift, the Spirit remains the transcendent Lord of the church (2 Cor. 3:17), the One who determines, in sovereign freedom, the nature of her *charismata,* and thus her ministry.[36] Put differently, the church is not "a Spirit-bearing structure . . . The structure of the church is not the medium but the expression of the Spirit."[37] The significance of this cannot be overstated. The Spirit-wrought union of the Church with Christ is the inner form of her life, the inner substance of her continuity:

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29 Ibid., 44. "The relation between the Church and the Body of [of the risen] Christ is one of *koinonia* and *abiding,* and is eschatologically conditioned." Ibid., 51.

30 *Royal Priesthood,* 66.

31 Ibid.

32 See the extended discussion of the *Shaliach* concept in relation to the Spirit in *CAC I,* 24, 38-45. This is not to say that the apostles and bishops do not represent or speak for Christ. It is simply to affirm that only the Spirit is *Shaliach* in the primary sense of personal identity.

33 Ibid., 18.

34 Ibid., 45.

35 Ibid., 18.

36 *Royal Priesthood,* 66.

37 W. H. Vanstone, "The Ministry in the New Testament," in *The Historic Episcopate*, ed. Kenneth M. Carey (London, Dacre Press, 1954), 40; Cited by Torrance in *Royal Priesthood,* 73.

> The inward form which the Covenant takes is the communion of the Spirit through which the apostolic Church is given to share in the love and life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is that communion in the very life and love of God . . . that is the inner substance and heart of the apostolic succession or continuity in the apostolically-founded Church.[38]

Thus, the essential unity of the church is the "unity of the *One Spirit* and the *One Body of Christ.*"[39] "Because this risen and ascended Christ gives His life-giving Spirit to the Church, the Church becomes *One Body* and *One Spirit* with Him."[40] This is simply the correlate of the fact that Christ Himself is the church's *esse.*

III. The Body of the Crucified, Risen, Ascended and Advent Christ

Having established the Christological eschatology which, through the Spirit, establishes the church as the body of Christ, let us consider the church more closely as the body of the crucified, risen, ascended, and advent Christ. These *loci* are not additions to, but a perspectival explication of, the theological frame we have already established. Our concern here is not with anything like a full exposition, but rather to sketch what this conception of the body of Christ means for the time of the church, the pattern of her ministry, and, preliminarily, for the nature of her continuity.

First, the church is the body of the crucified and risen Christ. The great principle here was enunciated in 1952 at the *Third World Conference on Faith and Order*, at Lund:

> What concerns Christ concerns His Body also. What happened to Christ uniquely in His once and for all death and resurrection on our behalf, happens also to the Church in its way as His Body…so that the way of Christ is the way of His Body.[41]

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38 *CAC I,* 26. Alternatively, in Christ, the form that God's "Covenant-Communion" with his people "takes is the Church, the Body of Christ." T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church: Volume II: The Ministry and The Sacraments of the Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 123.

39 *CAC I,* 237.

40 Ibid., 268. "It is the sphere where through the presence of the Spirit the salvation-events of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension are operative here and now within history, the sphere where within the old creation the new creation has broken in with power." *Royal Priesthood,* 23.

41 Lund Report, 7-8.

In the incarnation, the taking of the form of a servant, and throughout the whole of Christ's life, "man is confronted with the ultimate things," and "the judgment of God is brought to bear on man as never before." Christ acts as both God the judge and man bearing that same judgment throughout his life of obedience, climactically so at the cross. This atoning substitution requires, as its ecclesial correlate, the church to follow "by way of self-denial and crucifixion; by letting Christ take its place and displace its self-assertion" even as, by incorporation into his resurrection body, she receives his life.[42] Thus, following the fundamental Christological analogy:

> [She] can only live her life by putting off the old man and putting on the new, by ever refusing to be conformed to the pattern of this world and through her participation in, and her conformity to, the death of Christ, by being renewed in the power of His resurrection.[43]

It is important to grasp that, for Torrance, as for Paul in the passages Torrance regularly adduces in this connection (2 Cor. 4:10-12; Phil. 3:10), death and resurrection are not adjacent, much less discrete, realities in the church's life. They mutually involve one another. Yet, even this mutual involution needs to be carefully teased out. It involves a *logical* order: we carry about in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body – death, then life. But the cross and its pattern of life is never superseded, but rather enabled, confirmed, and permanently established by the resurrection life of Christ: we who are *alive* are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake. In the language of the Philippians text: we are, by the power of his resurrection, conformed to the likeness of his death. Stated differently, the church's existential union with the crucified Christ is pre-conditioned decisively by the resurrection, for she is united to him as his body only on the resurrection side of redemptive-history. More broadly, in an important and oft-repeated phrase of Torrance's, the risen and ascended Christ sends us back to the historical Christ.[44]

Thus, cruciformity is the basic form of the church's existence, yet it is an eschatologically conditioned, resurrection induced and sustained cruciformity. It is cruciformity nonetheless,[45] and Torrance highlights its ecumenical importance:

It is safe to say that if this doctrine of *the Suffering Servant* is not only made central in our doctrine of Christ, but is made normative for our doctrine of the form and order of the Church, then most of the major differences between the

42 *CAC I,* 244-45.

43 Ibid., 63. Thus the pattern of her life is essentially cruciform. Ibid., 235.

44 Among many examples, see ibid., 114, 231-32.

45 *Royal Priesthood,* 34.

churches can be cut clean away.[46]

Thus, for Torrance, it is critical to see that the church "in history shares in the humiliation of Christ in the form of a servant."[47] Christ's humiliation and exaltation correspond to the two conditions of the church, one of humiliation, the church militant, and one of glory, the church triumphant. Yet, the church is only the church triumphant through faith. Analogous to the Christian, she is *simul justus et peccator*.[48] In history, then, shaped by this eschatological tension, she goes forth under the cross in the form of a servant, and this servant-form decisively shapes and determines her thinking about ministry, order, and continuity:[49]

> . . . the Church has *as its essential pattern in history the death and resurrection of Christ.* That was one of the great insights of the Reformation. The Reformers used to point to the fact that the messianic community in Old Testament times was always subject to judgment and being plunged into disaster and death, but that God intended that in order to show by the destruction of the temple, by the abrogation of the cult, and the break in the continuity of the priestly succession, that the Kirk in all ages has her life and continuity in a marvelous preservation, in being constantly called out of death into life. If the essential pattern of the Incarnation, *death and resurrection,* was manifest in the Church before the Incarnation, how much more after it, when the Church as the Body of Christ goes out into history bearing about in her the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus?[50]

If the church's dying and rising as the body of Christ entails non-conformity to the fashion, the form, the pattern, and the schematization of this world (Rom. 12:2), then outward or historical form can never bear the church's *essential* structure.[51]

Surely the essential form of the visible Church wherein she images her Lord

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46 *CAC I,* 139.

47 Alternatively, this is cast in terms of Christ's movement of descent and ascent, his *katabasis* and *anabasis. CAC II,* 189; *Royal Priesthood,* 38-9.

48 *CAC I,* 47. Torrance, describing Luther's experience, calls justification "an eschatological act of pure grace which anticipated Christ's ultimate vindication of the sinner at the final judgment." *Eschatology* 41.

49 *CAC I,* 81-82, 250-251. In Calvin's words "it is appointed to the Church, as long as it has its pilgrimage in the world, to engage in warfare continually under the cross." T. F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church: A Study in the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), 125.

50 *CAC I,* 62. We shall return to the relevance of Israel's historical ordeal for ecclesial continuity when we take up the priesthood of Christ and the church.

51 Ibid., 203-204.

is to be found in her humble service in which the great reconciliation already wrought out in the Body of Christ is lived out among men, and the church in life and action becomes sacramentally correlative to the life and passion of Jesus Christ.[52]

This relativizing of outer form is simply a correlate of the reality that Christ himself is the church's *esse*, and that her essential unity is pneumatic union with the *eschatos Adam.* "If we have no authority for holding that such a structure or form belongs to the Church as the final eschatological and ontological reality, have we any right to say it belongs to the *esse* of the Church?"[53]

While this relativizing does not eliminate the importance of order for Torrance but rather frames and shapes our approach to it, it does entail that, as the body of the crucified and risen Christ, the church, including her teaching and her orders, remains subject to the searching judgment of the cross. "All conceptions of order have to be determined by the servanthood of the Church under the Cross."[54] Thus, atonement is the road to unity. "There is no other way for the Church, and so no other way to reunion, than by the way of the Cross, for it is the Cross which is the way to the Resurrection of the One Body."[55]

Let us shift the focus of this discussion of the church as the body of the crucified and risen Christ to the resurrection proper. As we have indicated, the church as the body of the *risen* Christ highlights her being situated in the eschatological tension of the "already" and the "not yet," between the penultimate and ultimate acts of God in redemptive-history. Because we are united to the risen Christ who was *raised* for our justification (Rom. 4:25) eschatology is an essential, constitutive feature of faith.[56]

Because we are united to Christ, anchored to Jesus who in our flesh has risen from the dead and now lives on the resurrection side of death and wrath

52 Ibid., 204. The form of the church imaging the form of Christ cannot be seen in any structure or hierarchy conceived of as belonging to the *esse* of the church. Ibid.

53 Ibid., 205. Note that this last point is in the form of a question. Torrance is aware of the difficulty of drawing dogmatic conclusions from the final eschatological form of the church as seen in the Apocalypse.

54 Ibid., 253. See *Royal Priesthood,* 33.

55 *CAC I,* 246. See Ibid., 277-78.

56 Ibid., 65, 98. This is yet another aspect of eschatology being the application of Christology to the church. Eschatology is not an addendum to faith but, citing H. R. Mackintosh, it is "the fiber of the living strand." It bears something of the eschatological cast that characterizes all the scriptures. *Incarnation,* 298. Faith has "an inner eschatological form." Ibid., 306. Faith requires the eschatological gap between the already and the not yet for that is the very frame of its existence in the new time which has come in Christ. *CAC I,* 313.

and darkness, we are eternally anchored to hope. That is the cardinal fact upon which eschatology hinges.[57]

As the body of the risen Christ, the church is already risen with him and shares in his eschatological life. His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. Indeed, as the first-fruits, the firstborn of the new creation, his resurrection means that the general resurrection of the dead, the eschatological harvest, has already begun.[58] This entails a certain freedom and detachment from the church's own history, tradition, practices, procedures, and legal enactments, for the church lives in the risen One as having died to the past.[59]

The reason for this is that "in Him the new creation is already a fact, and it is in Him that its continuity is a living dynamic reality . . . in him . . . there is *new time*: the temporal continuity of the new creation in indissoluble union with the eternal God."[60] The whole appearance of Christ is a kind of intrusion, an eschatological invasion of this new time, and thus the fulfillment of the purposes of creation. This reality is sealed by the resurrection:

> The Birth, Life, and Death of Jesus Christ all speak of the most complete interpenetration of history, and indeed of a desperate struggle with the terrible continuity of its sin and guilt, but they receive their truth and validity in the Resurrection where the continuity of sin is decidedly broken and yet where there emerges the new continuity in time. Here the visible continuity of history is judged as an empty husk, the worldly succession of the church as an ecclesiastical shell, and yet the new is seen to be one continuous act with the first creation. Here where the iron-grip of guilt-laden history is broken we have the great salvation-events which are creative of the Church as continuous with the living Body of the resurrected Jesus Christ.[61]

Notice that the fulfillment of the purposes of creation is included here, yet Torrance warns that this cannot be interpreted merely teleologically. It is not that the church does not have a *telos,* an end, but the difference between a

57 Ibid., 99.

58 Ibid., 113. Torrance uses the suggestive analogy of the birth of a baby's head as meaning the birth of the body inevitably follows.

59 Ibid., 113-14,

60 Ibid., 213. Torrance holds that there is something like a hypostatic union between eternity and time in the God-man. Yet, even if we reject this, the general point he is making stands. The new creation, and thus the time of the age to come, has arrived in Christ. See *Royal Priesthood,* 49.

61 *CAC I,* 213. The real life of the Church lies in its participation in the resurrection, in the new creation, and so in its detachment from the forms of this present evil age. Ibid., 314.

Greek ideal end and the *eschatos* which has broken into time in Christ goes to the core of the gospel.[62] Rather the teleological end is intrinsically eschatological for it comes through the appearance and resurrection of the *eschatos Adam.* It is precisely as eschatological act that the *telos* is, in an already-not yet fashion, achieved. Teleologically heavy accounts of fulfillment will mute the radical disruption and transcending of the continuity of this present age, and will tend to lead to linear, historical conceptions of the church and her ministry which see them as a prolongation of the incarnation, and thus as a historical continuation of his decisive, once for all work.[63]

The church's continuity, then, is not found on "the level of the contingent . . . but in the living continuity of the new creation behind the forms and fashions of the fallen world but interpenetrating it through the gospel."[64] The time of this age is sin-laded, guilt-impregnated time, irreversibly passing away into death and corruption. It is what Brunner calls "crumbling time." But "in the resurrection of Christ there emerges a new time…flowing against the stream of crumbling time."[65] This does not mean the abrogation of the church's historical existence, but it does mean that her continuity "is determined by the new time of the risen Lord."[66] No conception of historical succession can bypass the resurrection, but rather, because the church is the body of the risen Christ, her ministerial order must be thought out in terms of the relation of the resurrection to history.[67]

If we ask what this thinking out of the implications of the resurrection for historical ecclesiastical order means for Torrance, we could sum it up in two words: ambiguity and relativization. Order is relativized because the church lives from beyond itself, beyond its space and time, as the body of the risen Christ. She is the new creation in the midst of crumbling time. The New Jerusalem comes down from above, from the already present eschatological future, and it is from there that the church and her orders receive their validation and vindication. She is eschatologically pulled, not historically pushed, into the future. Order is ambiguous because the new time which has come in Christ does not sit lightly with, or float above, this present age, the form (*schema)* of which

62 *Incarnation,* 304. Neither is this the Jewish eschatological conception of two linear ages. *CAC I,* 307.

63 Ibid., 61-2, 236, 256.

64 Ibid., 214.

65 *Royal Priesthood,* 50.

66 *CAC II,* 24. *Royal Priesthood,* 56. "If the ministry of the Church is the function of the Body of Christ, then we have to think of that in terms of His risen Body, and of the relation of the resurrection to history." Ibid., 42.

67 Ibid.

is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31). The new creation, the new time, interpenetrates, judges, breaks up, and flows against the stream of crumbling time. Thus, the church lives in a situation where simple linear historical analysis has become impossible, and to seek it is a grievous misreading of her time, continuity, and order. Her orders, as with her life in general, are free gifts of the free Spirit of the Lord, *charismata,* which are never under her possession or control. As such, her orders, as with her life in general, cannot be *schematized to this aeon* (Rom. 12:2), they cannot be thought of adequately in terms of the linear ordering principles, the *stoicheia* of this age.[68] Order in the church is essentially a product of Christological eschatology, the inner substance of which is pneumatological:[69]

> Because she is already a resurrected body the church cannot claim, without arresting repentance, and quenching the Holy Spirit, that in this fallen world historical succession is of the *esse,* the very nature of the church.[70]

One last point is in order concerning the church as the body of the risen Christ. As participating in his risen body as the one new man and the new creation, in her "is manifested the perfect oneness in which all human divisions disappear (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28)."[71] This eternally grounded yet eschatologically conditioned oneness gives to the church a wholeness, a catholicity, which, while difficult to manifest in the conditions of our fallen time, nevertheless precludes seeing the church as a historical prolongation of the incarnation. To do that would be to confound "the wholeness of the risen Christ with a historical catholicity here and now."[72]

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68 See the discussion in *Royal Priesthood,* 52-57. There Torrance expounds *stoicheia*, often translated "elemental principles," from a cluster of New Testament texts as entailing walking, or proceeding (historically) in a way. The term, while disputed, is used positively if proceeding according to the Spirit or Christ is in view, and negatively if proceeding according to the law or some cosmological principle other than Christ is in view. On the various possible meanings of *stoicheia*, all of which Torrance sees as sharing the idea of succession in time, and on its ability to become a legal principle of bondage, see *CAC I,* 256-57. The disruptive nature of the new time upon the old is, for Torrance, a general feature of apocalyptic literature. *Eschatology,* 61; *Incarnation,* 301. On the inadequacy of a purely linear conception of time as, for example, in Cullman's *Christ and Time*, see *Incarnation* 333. On the New Jerusalem's descent see ibid., 338. We should mention in this connection Torrance's fondness for the image of the church in *The Shepherd of Hermas* as an elderly woman who gets progressively younger. *CAC I,* 96; *CAC II,* 200; *Royal Priesthood,* 48.

69 Ibid., 67-68. Even defining the church merely in terms of "marks" or activities, as with Luther, can obscure "its essence as the risen Body of Christ within history." *Eschatology,* 51.

70 *Incarnation,* 343.

71 *CAC I,* 267.

72 *Incarnation,* 343-44. *CAC I,* 49-51. The church's eschatologically conditioned unity

Let us shift the discussion to the church as the body of the ascended Christ. Torrance has a remarkably thick and fully developed doctrine of the ascension, and we do not intend to expound that here.[73] For our purposes, much of the material on the ascension and the resurrection naturally overlaps. Nevertheless, there are unique issues concerning the church's order, continuity, and time which are highlighted by the ascension.

In the ascension, Christ, as at the transfiguration and on the road to Emmaus, vanishes from ongoing empirical history, having "withdrawn Himself from sight," and from the right hand of God the Father Almighty pours his Spirit out on the church. Thus, here, the distinction between Christ and the church, the inability to resolve the essence of her life into linear historical relations or to conceive of her as a prolongation of the incarnation, comes starkly into view. Nevertheless, as the gift of the Spirit indicates, Christ refuses to be separated from his body.[74] However, the ascension establishes this unity as the unity of those raised and *hidden* with the withdrawn and ascended Christ in God. While it in no way excuses the scandal of our divisions, this is an ontologically prior and ineradicable unity from which comes the possibility of healing and union. Torrance applies Paul's instructions in Colossians 3 to the nature of the church's oneness:

> If you are risen with Christ, then seek your oneness above. For your divisions are dead and your oneness is hid with Christ in God. When he who is your oneness will appear, then your oneness will appear with Him in glory. *Mortify therefore the divisions of your members which are on the earth*."[75]

This paraphrase is marvelously helpful, for it is a virtual summary of all we have said to this point on Torrance's framing of the questions of ministerial order and ecclesial continuity. This is the Christological eschatology which establishes, in the Spirit, the church as the body of the crucified, risen, ascended, and advent Christ, removing the essence of her life, her unity, and her continuity from any simple historical calculus and yet calling her to manifest that unity in history.

The ascension does two other critical things. First, it points the church back to the historical Jesus as he is revealed in the apostolic foundation handed down in the New Testament scriptures. "That is the place where the risen and ascended Lord chooses to meet his church and to keep Covenant with it, in the historical

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both interpenetrates and transcends history. Ibid., 196, 211.

73 See T. F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 265-314; *Space, Time, and Resurrection*, 106-58.

74 *CAC I,* 114, 198, 310. *CAC II,* 21. On Christ's "vanishing from out of sight" see *Incarnation,* 344.

75 *CAC I,* 268-69.

Jesus crucified for the world's salvation."[76] What is crucial here is not simply Torrance's oft-repeated axiom that "the ascended Christ drives us back to the historical Christ," but also the concomitant reality that we meet in doing so: not the historical Jesus as the first disciples met him - that would be impossible since the resurrection and the ascension have intervened - but rather the *ascended* Christ who, at the beginning of the process, drove us to the life and ministry of the historical Jesus enshrined in the apostolic foundation.[77] Thus, there is a kind of triangular, or perhaps circular, relation.[78] The ascended Christ drives us back to the historical Christ where we meet the ascended Christ. This not only shows us the complexities of the time relations involved in the church's life, it also clearly means that we cannot abide a linear historical succession from the present back to the historical Jesus conceived of as essential to the church's life and ministry. This is, in its most theologically architectonic form, what Torrance is after when he speaks of bypassing the ascension, or of seeing the church as a prolongation of the incarnation and its ministry as an *alter Christus*. The new time of the ascended Christ, the time of the historical Jesus, and the fallen time of the church are pneumatically related, and the tensions they involve are basic to questions of order:

> In all Church order we are concerned with *the time of Jesus on earth* when God's Son condescended to enter within our fallen time in order to redeem it, but also with *the time of Jesus ascended into Eternity* who yet bestows Himself upon us in time through His Spirit. The time of the church will therefore be defined by the relation of the Church in history to the historical Jesus Christ, and to the ascended and advent Jesus Christ; the church's life, worship, fellowship, and ministry are all ordered with regard to that twofold time,

76 Ibid., 114.

77 "But even when we turn to the historical Jesus we can no longer make contact with him as did the disciples before his crucifixion and resurrection. We must seek to contact him, therefore, not after the flesh but after the Spirit. We go back to the historical Jesus, to the gospel story, but there it is with the risen and ascended Lord that we make contact." *CAC I,* 311; *CAC II,* 23, 199-200. "We make contact with the historical Jesus *as risen and ascended*, not just as on object for historical investigation by the canons of credibility available for all other events in fading time." *Royal Priesthood,* 58. See also T. F. Torrance, "The Trinitarian Foundation," in *Theological Dialogue Between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*, ed. T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 92-3; *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 133-35, 147.

78 The triangle can be conceived in slightly modified and wider form if we include the *Parousia*. "Thus the doctrine of the Church must be thought out in terms of triangular relation between the Church and the historical Christ, the risen and ascended Mediator, and the Christ who will come again in His full Humanity as well as Deity." *CAC I,* 231-32.

> heavenly and earthly, historical and eternal. No adequate understanding of the order of the church can overlook that twofold involvement in time.[79]

Torrance, alternatively, speaks of this twofold time as horizontal and vertical time. Horizontal time is ordered historical succession, and vertical time is the time in the Spirit in which the church participates in the time of the ascended Christ. It is vertical time which enables the church to escape being merely a historical construct trapped in "guilt-fettered time" and the irreversibility of its "piled-up determinisms."[80] The church, which is undoubtedly a historical reality, knows that its true life is hid with the ascended Christ in God "beyond the passing and successive forms of this age."[81] Thus, it is the ascension which creates the essentially eschatological character of the church's faith, which has not yet become sight, for the Christ in whom she trusts is, in Calvin's words, "not without propriety . . . said to be absent from His people, till He return again clothed with a new sovereignty."[82]

In this time of faith not yet become sight, of grace and not yet glory,[83] the gifts of the ministry are gifts of the ascended Lord, "the only Apostle and Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. 2:25)" who is personally present and represented by the Spirit.[84] Only in the Spirit can the two times created by the ascension be related. The Spirit "links the historical Jesus and the ascended Lord," and "through the Spirit we can think of Christ as historically absent and as actually present."[85] Thus, the church's orders must be open to the ascended Christ and his intervention in this situation of eschatological tension, and must never seek an over-realized eschatological capturing of the order to be fully revealed in the new creation:[86]

> Because of the resurrection and ascension, the coherent and ordered sequences of the Church's life and mission are essentially *open structures*, and more like scaffolding which is necessary for the erection of a building but which is cast

79 *CAC II,* 23.

80 Ibid., 25. Horizontal time supplies the material content while vertical time, through the Spirit of the ascended One, supplies the immediacy of actual encounter. *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 147.

81 *CAC II,* 24.

82 *Kingdom and Church,* 112.

83 The ascension means the church is, if you will, both in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:9-10). *Royal Priesthood,* 59.

84 Ibid., 41.

85 *Space, Time, and Resurrection* 134-35.

86 *CAC II,* 197. In the ascension the whole question of church order is withdrawn from the arena of our disposal. *Royal Priesthood,* 72-82.

> away when the building stands complete. Hence we can never identify the patterns of the church's life in worship or ministry with the real inner forms of its being in the love of God but may regard them only as temporary forms which will fall away when with the advent of Christ the full reality of the new humanity of the Church as the Body of Christ will be unveiled.[87]

The second thing the ascension does in Torrance's exposition, in addition to driving us back to the historical Christ, is "direct the eyes of the Church forward to the day when Christ will keep His promise and return to judge the quick and the dead and reign in glory."[88] The ascension directs us to the *parousia* of Christ, and this means that the triangular relation to which we have referred can be expressed as entailing the historical Jesus, the ascended Lord, and the advent Christ.[89] Let us consider the church under the rubric of the body of the advent Christ.

"Eschatology concerns the Parousia of Jesus Christ the King of the Kingdom." What Torrance is after here is the fact that the *parousia*, strictly speaking, consists of the whole manifestation of Christ from his birth through his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second advent. The two advents are, if you will, two poles, two modes, of the one great all-inclusive *parousia*. "The link between the two advents is the Parousia of Christ through the Spirit, the abiding Parousia." Thus, for Torrance, the *parousia* conceived in this manner is not merely the culminating event of the second advent, rather it is coterminous with what we have called Christological Eschatology, the inner substance of which is Pneumatology.[90] In this sense, the *parousia* entails and underwrites

87 *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 137. Two of Torrance's oft-repeated ideas occur here. First, there is a distinction between the church's inner, dogmatic form - its essential relation with Christ in the Spirit - and its outer, ecclesial or juridical form. *CAC I,* 93, 130-34, 235. Second, order, for all its importance, is ultimately scaffolding. As a corollary of its relativized and ambiguous status that we discussed above, it is also provisional. *CAC II,* 18. *Kingdom and Church,* 138. While Torrance is generally consistent on the *esse* of the church, yet somewhat confusedly he can say "the ministry is utterly essential to the building up of the Church, and belongs to the *esse* of the Church in history, but it is essentially scaffolding that God uses . . ." The point seems to be that the ministry has a certain historical necessity but, given his overall theological architecture of the church, that does not entail false notions of its continuity and succession. *CAC I,* 102.

88 Ibid., 114.

89 Ibid., 231-32.

90 Ibid., 309. "It was not till the middle of the second century that the Church started to speak of two advents of Christ and so to use the word parousia in the plural – at least I am not aware of any earlier use of it." Later in his career Torrance asserts that the plural arises with Justin Martyr and Hippolytus. *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 144.

virtually all we have said to this point. The doctrine of the church, the body of the *eschatos Adam* who has become life-giving Spirit, is eschatological, with all the disruptions that at every point our time entails. "The Church is constituted throughout history as the place of meeting and worship under the vaulted arch of the one indivisible *parousia* of Jesus Christ which spans the first and second advents."[91]

Just as the ascended Christ drives us back to the historical Christ enshrined in the apostolic foundation of the church where we indeed meet him as ascended, so also, at the same time, this dynamic drives us out and forward to the coming Christ. "There is no other road to the Parousia of the risen Jesus, the Lord of glory, except through the Jesus of Humiliation, the Jesus of Bethlehem and Judea and Galilee and Calvary." Thus, "eschatology and world-mission belong together."[92]

This consummating of the *parousia* is near precisely because its two poles, the two advents of Christ, are held together in the Spirit. The end is near because the end has appeared in Christ, and its absolute nearness impinges on the church through the eschatological Spirit.[93] This present and future reality, having and hoping, is difficult to grasp, for it is not two phases of a linearly related project. Torrance cites Jesus in John 5:25: "The hour is coming and now is' to illumine the mystery. It is our ever-present tendency to unbend the triangular eschatological relation into a straight line. Yet, "the relation between the *today* and the *eschaton* is much more a tension between the hidden and the manifest, the veiled and the unveiled, then between dates in calendar time."[94] The distance of the ascension stands in contrapuntal relation, through the Spirit, to the nearness of the *parousia* in glory.[95]

Nevertheless, this future and final advent of Christ reminds the church acutely that its being one body with Christ is a reality which is not yet consummated:

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91 Ibid., 153.

92 *CAC I,* 311-12. *Royal Priesthood,* 58-59. *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 156.

93 *CAC I,* 312-13. Thus, Torrance gives no credence to the notion that the New Testament writers were mistaken concerning the second appearing of Christ. Its nearness is a theological necessity and seeing it as mistaken represents being captured by a purely linear view of the church's time. *Incarnation,* 334.

94 Ibid., 315-316, 334. See *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 152-153.

95 *Royal Priesthood,* 45. This means that a key aspect of the eschatological structure of faith in Christ, the *eschatos Adam*, is belief in the nearness of the *parousia. Incarnation,* 311. The ascension introduces an *eschatological pause* in the heart of the one great *parousia* which enables us to speak of the first and second advents of Christ. *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 145, 152.

> Between the 'already One Body' and the 'still to become One Body' we have the doctrine of the ascension and the advent of Christ, the ascension reminding us that the Church is other than Christ . . . the advent that the Church in its historical pilgrimage is under the judgment of the impending advent, while already justified in Him. . . . Because the Church is at once in the old creation and in the new creation the advent of Christ in glory is inevitably imminent, for the new creation is always knocking at the door of the old. . . . On the other hand, Christian eschatology envisions a relation between the present and the future which is just as decisive and inescapable as the ascension. 'Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is' (1 John 3:2).[96]

These two features of the eschatological relation give the church a new orientation to the succession of time in this age. "The Church is summoned to look beyond its historical forms in this world to the day when Christ will change the body of our humiliation and make it like unto the Body of His Glory (Phil. 3:21)."[97] The coming of the Lord in glory will reveal the provisional "scaffolding" nature of much of the church's juridical life. The church that lives in this expectation and hope, casting itself under the judgement of the cross, will not neglect "the ministry and the oracles and the ordinances of the New Covenant" but will use them as they must be used "by the Body of the crucified, risen, ascended and advent Christ."[98]

The Christ whose presence in the life and ministry of the church is also a coming, a *parousia* not yet unveiled, reminds the church that her living continuity in the new creation in Christ is not yet fully revealed, and thus it is not something which can be mastered or imprisoned in the current space-time structures of this age:[99]

> If the given unity of the Church is essentially eschatological then the validity of all that she does is conditioned by the Parousia and cannot be made to repose upon any primitive structure of unity already complete in the natural realm . . . So we must think of the validity of the Church's ministry . . . not in terms of history alone but in terms of a divine act which entails the eschatological suspension of all earthly validity.[100]

96 *Royal Priesthood,* 46.

97 Ibid. The church's new time in Christ is "concealed under the form and fashion of old time, or (shall we say?) under the likeness of sinful time." *Incarnation,* 335.

98 *CAC I,* 115.

99 Ibid., 46, 52.

100 Ibid., 198.

In other words, it is the *parousia* which, even more than the resurrection and the ascension, makes clear that the New Jerusalem comes down from above. The advent Christ validates the church and her orders from the end, from the future:

> This means that the Church is constantly summoned to look beyond its historical forms to the fullness and perfection that will be disclosed at the *parousia* and must never identify the structures it acquires and must acquire in the nomistic forms of this-worldly historical existence with the essential forms of its new being in Christ himself.[101]

Far from passively accepting current divisions, Torrance sees his eschatological vision as impinging radically upon them in judgment:

> Because its true life and unity are lodged in a future that penetrates back into the present, we must understand the disunity of the church in history as even now under the attack of the unity that is yet to be revealed.[102]

This last citation highlights something that we should make explicit as we close this section. Torrance abhors the visible fractioning of the church. The extent of his writings on the subject in the early portion of his career testify to his passionate engagement in the early ecumenical movement. There is almost no aspect of the issues involved, nor salient feature of the various ecclesial traditions, including his own Scottish Presbyterianism, which is left unexamined or immune from criticism. In addition, Torrance makes numerous practical suggestions for bridging the gaps between churches. However, what we have tried to highlight to this point is the frame within which, Torrance insists, all must be set if genuine progress is to be made. Christological Eschatology, the inner substance of which is Pneumatology, is of foundational and pervasive importance, for the church is the body of the crucified, risen, ascended and advent Christ. This substantive ecclesiological vision reorients the time of the church decisively, and prevents seeing her continuity as something which can be read off the linear time structures of this fallen age. As such, questions of order and continuity are relativized and intrinsically ambiguous.

IV. The Apostolic Foundation

We turn now to the apostolic foundation to which the ascended Christ sends the church to encounter the historical Jesus.

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101 *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 157.

102 *CAC I,* 279. Torrance is a thoroughly eschatological ecumenist.

> The Church on earth is founded historically upon the apostles commissioned by Christ, but founded supernaturally by the baptism of the Spirit sent by Christ at Pentecost; so that the Church has a double relation to Christ, historically though the apostles, and supernaturally through the Spirit.[103]

While the apparent "historical-supernatural" dialectic here is unfortunate, it is clear that Torrance sees the apostolic foundation, and the church's relation to it historically, as itself supernatural, since it is the product of the incarnate *eschatos Adam,* the structurally enduring fruit of his first advent, and a result of his all-embracing *parousia.* This is simply another way of speaking of what we have called the triangular relation, or the horizontal and vertical relations Christ has established with the church. At no point, then, is the historical sub-eschatological. What is in view here is simply that the church does have real historical and simultaneously trans-historical relations to Christ.[104]

These two elements are not dialectically related. They are "grounded in the New Covenant which Christ has established in His Body and Blood." [105] This is a critical point about the time of the church which advances the discussion. The various disruptions of linear time created by the intrusion of Christ, and the new time-relations created by that intrusion, hold together in Christ. This means that the fidelity of God himself in the covenant fulfilled in Christ undergirds the church's continuity.[106] More fully, the fact that the outward works of God are one and indivisible means the Holy Trinity is the *esse*, the inner form of the church's life, and the ground of her continuity:

> It is the covenanted faithfulness of Christ which undergirds the whole foundation of the Church and the whole of its continuity throughout all the changes and chances of history. But as part of the Covenant, and in fulfillment of the promise of the Covenant, God bestowed upon His Church the Holy Spirit through whom the Church as founded upon the apostles is given to have communion with Christ. . . . The inward form which the Covenant takes is the communion of the Spirit through which the apostolic Church is given to share in the love and life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is that communion in the very life and love of God . . . which is the inner substance and heart of the apostolic

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103 Ibid., 25.

104 *CAC II*, 23-24. The church can in no way detach itself from the fullness of time in Jesus, yet: "It is only within the time of the historical Jesus that the new time of the risen Jesus breaks in upon the Church in history, and gives it to share and abide in the new time of the new creation."

105 *CAC I,* 25.

106 *CAC II,* 28-29.

succession or continuity in the apostolically-founded Church.[107]

This continuity depends upon the unique character of the apostolate, and the chosen, epochal, once-for-all character of the apostles whose obedience is uniquely assimilated to Christ's own obedience in the founding of the church:

> Here in the foundation of the New Covenant the apostolic obedience is knitted into the obedience of Christ, or rather, the obedience of Christ in fulfillment of the Covenant draws into itself the obedience of the apostles. . . . Because this is grounded in the New Covenant it is not a pattern and structure of obedience that rests upon its own persistence, but reposes upon the faithfulness of God in the Covenant which undergirds the apostolic obedience to Christ, sanctifies and secures it in Christ, and gives it an architectonic function in the foundation of the church on earth.[108]

Formed around the historical Jesus as the nucleus of the church, and later empowered by the Lord, the Spirit, for their unique role, in the apostolate "we do not have the initial stage of a continuous process, but the perpetually persisting foundation of the Church and its grounding in the incarnational Revelation and Reconciliation."[109] The apostolic word, like the apostolic obedience, is assimilated by Christ to his word from whence it derives its authority and receives its permanently enshrined place in Holy Scripture.[110] The apostolate is the unique human end of the revelation of God in Christ, and thus the apostolic word is uniquely empowered by the Spirit. It is as particular and as unrepeatable as the incarnation, the ascension, Pentecost, or the New Testament documents.[111] In this context Torrance makes an intriguing eschatologically-colored point: "Only the apostles were appointed by Christ to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The eschatologically laid foundation is, unlike the ministry which proceeds upon it, an eschatologically enduring feature of the church's order.[112]

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107 *CAC I,* 26. Again notice the distinction between an inner continuity in the life of God and an outer continuity of the church's public ministerial life.

108 Ibid., 25. See Ibid., 216.

109 Ibid., 26.

110 Torrance holds that Scripture, while it is the supreme authority, cannot be abstracted from the apostolate. Neither can it be separated, historically or theologically, from the Rule of Faith (which took later form as the Apostles' Creed), or from the faithful ministry descended from the apostles.

111 Ibid., 41-42, 50, 88, 215, 309. *Royal Priesthood,* 28.

112 *CAC I,* 27. Also, *CAC II,* 38-39. See Luke 22:30; Matt. 19:28. To return to Torrance's earlier cautiously raised questions about the final state of the church depicted in the book of Revelation, we note that the twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb permanently establish the apostolic uniqueness. The overcomers,

Thus, in the strictest sense, there can be no apostolic succession for the apostolic function cannot be transmitted. The apostles do not have hands laid on them,[113] but lay hands on others who obtain a ministry dependent on and subordinate to them, a ministry "of a quite different character and order, and without their judicial or magisterial authority."[114]

There is, however, a two-fold secondary sense in which we can speak of the church's apostolic ministry and succession. First, there is the church's obedience to, and proclamation of, the apostolic doctrine and *kerygma* now sealed in Holy Scripture:

> And so apostolic succession means that the Church as the living Body of Christ apostolically begotten through the incorruptible Word of God continues in being in history, in reliance upon the Covenant promises of Christ. This Church continues to be apostolic in that it continues throughout its movement and change from age to age to be schooled in the apostolic tradition, and determined by the apostolic Gospel. It is therefore a succession through the Spirit in obedience, in mission, a succession of service, of faith and doctrine, all in the continuity of the redeemed life of the people of God.[115]

While this statement includes the oft-repeated Protestant assertion that apostolic succession is succession in apostolic doctrine, Torrance's formulation is much more robust. Not only does he point out that succession can take many non-juridical forms such as mission and service, but what he is doing above is simply further explicating the Christological Eschatology, the inner substance of which is Pneumatology, now with the added referent of the eschatologically laid, yet concretely historical, apostolic foundation.

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all the faithful (Rev. 3:21) are also given throne access, and while the twenty-four elders, the presbytery of heaven representing all the saints (probably of both dispensations), is depicted, there is no eschatological counterpoint to any historical hierarchy. The outer form of the church, its scaffolding, is torn away, and its inner eschatological form on the apostolic foundation and in communion with the Holy Trinity is revealed. We do not desire to press this point unduly. We are aware that the Scriptures, the gospel, and the Sacraments are also not present in the New Jerusalem. Yet what these things point to, communion with the Triune God, is now fully realized and present. On the question of *order* there are indeed eschatological counterpoints in the twenty-four elders and the apostolic foundations. The absence of any hierarchical correlate is, at least, intriguing.

113 Rather, they share in a unique way in Christ's High Priestly self-consecration and anointing. *CAC II,* 38-39.

114 *CAC I,* 27. Torrance considers the idea that the bishops were successors of the apostles to be a post-apostolic development. All subsequent ordinations bind the church to its once-for-all consecration in Christ and the apostolic foundation. Ibid., 38-57.

115 *CAC I,* 28. See *Theological Dialogue,* 116.

This apostolicity is a property, crucially, of the whole body of the crucified, risen, ascended and advent Christ, for if what we have contended for earlier is true, then continuity and succession are matters which pertain first and foremost to the whole reality of the body of Christ. In other words, this is a fuller statement of what the essential life of the church, as Christ's body, consists of in history. In Christ and through the Spirit, she has her life in the Triune God in and through the apostolic foundation laid by that same Triune God in Christ through the Spirit.

The second way one can speak of apostolic succession "is of a ministerial succession within the apostolic succession of the whole church." This is not a self-perpetuating continuity, but one dependent on, and subordinate to, the living Word and the apostolic foundation. Its relation relative to the Word is not architectonic, but rather one of obedience.[116] The ministry is subordinate to Christ and to what it ministers (Word and Sacrament),[117] and it cannot be abstracted from the wholeness of the continuity and succession of the Body of Christ. While the ministry is necessary for the church in history, Torrance speaks forcefully of isolating it from the whole body's life in Christ:

> It is a fundamental error to abstract the ministry from that wholeness and to make it an essential and self-sufficient line of ministerial succession . . . To isolate ministerial succession into an independent principle is to make it demonic, for it is to usurp the place of Christ himself in Word and Sacrament.[118]

Ministerial succession, as we have seen, is bound up with the relativity and contingency of our fallen time. This does not mean it is not an inestimable good, but everything finally depends on the covenant fidelity of Christ himself to his whole body within which ministerial order has its rightful place. Thus, ministerial succession which loses its subordination to Holy Scripture is a false succession no matter if it is unbroken or ancient. Yet, a succession which is broken can be knit back together, and "its defects are more than amply made up in the coherent succession of the whole apostolic tradition."[119] This is problematic for traditional

116 Ibid., 88.

117 Ibid., 133.

118 Ibid., 28-29. "To establish the validity of the ministry on grounds independent of the authority of the living Church (e.g. by linear succession of episcopal consecration), and then to judge whether a church is part of the Body by whether it has a valid ministry, is to invert the whole New Testament conception" (J. A. T. Robinson, *The Historic Episcopate,* 15). Cited by Torrance, *Royal Priesthood,* 72. We shall look at the ministry of Word and Sacrament below.

119 *CAC I,* 30-31. Put differently, the inner and outer forms of the church are not coterminous in history, ibid., 133-34.

notions of apostolic succession but axiomatic for Torrance, since the true source and ground of continuity is Christological and pertains to the wholeness of the church as the Body of Christ.

Since it is in this ministerial succession that church relates historically to the apostles, let us look more closely at it. The first thing to be done is to distinguish between functions unique to the apostles and functions passed on to others ordained by them:

> The apostles had unique functions which they could not and did not pass on; but they did act as presbyters in ministering the Word and Sacraments and exercising a pastoral oversight in the Church. These functions as administered by the apostles themselves were necessarily fulfilled in a unique way in conjunction with their unique authority in the Word, and when separated from the apostles' unique ministry, they inevitably assumed another and subordinate character. There was no direct extending of the apostolic ministry into the continuing ministry of the Church. Some of their functions, however, came to be exercised by others, and underwent a change of character appropriate to ministers who were not themselves apostles, that is, who had no authority in the direct mediation of Revelation and in forming the New Testament witness.[120]

However, to merely differentiate between the non-transferable and the transferable features of the apostolic ministry (or, more precisely, of the ministry of Christ handed on through the apostles), and to find in the latter a *direct* lineal historical relation to the historical Jesus is a mistake. It flattens out the church's historical relation to Christ because it bypasses the resurrection and the ascension, thus causing the church's "supernatural" relation to Christ through the Spirit to drop out of sight. "The ministry has a transcendent source in the gifts of the Holy Spirit sent down by the ascended Lord upon His Church." It also says too little about the wholeness of the church's ministry in Christ:

> The New Testament . . . boldly speaks of the Church as participating in the whole ministry of Christ. He fulfills His ministry in a unique and unrepeatable way, but the Church's ministry is to be undertaken with reference not to a part but to the whole of His ministry. Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King, and the Church's ministry is to be correlatively prophetic, priestly, and kingly.[121]

120 Ibid., 31.

121 *Royal Priesthood,* 36-37. Apostolic succession cannot be transmitted because its real substance has to do with "the complete Body of Christ, the all-inclusive fullness or wholeness which, precisely because it is that, cannot be thought of in terms of the more or less of historical succession." This is the wholeness, the catholicity if you will, of the risen Christ himself into which we are incorporated. *CAC I,* 217.

The correlation in view means that the church's ministry is neither identical with Christ's nor another ministry separate from his. It is a participation in the whole of his ministry, in subordination and service, in the holistic relation of Head and members. The conjunction of these two points, the bypassing of the resurrection and ascension in establishing historical connection, and the failure to see the creaturely, analogical wholeness of the church's ministry as the body of Christ, leads to viewing the church as a prolongation of the incarnation, to wrong notions of Eucharistic sacrifice as prolonging the one sacrifice of Christ, and to the notion that the church's ministerial priesthood is the prolongation Christ's priesthood handed on initially to the apostles.[122]

Thus, the passing on of the ministry from generation to generation through the laying on of hands "is only a sign of the real thing, namely the communion of the people of God in the divine life and love which they receive from Jesus Christ Himself through His Word and Spirit."[123] The ministry, even when it is faithful and well-ordered, belongs to the outer form of the church and can only function as a sign of its inner dogmatic continuity and life.[124] As such a sign it attests to the church's being bound to the historical Jesus, yet "historical succession does not secure or guarantee the binding of the Church to Christ, for He, the risen and ascended Lord, is not bound by the forms of fallen time."[125] In other words, the well-ordered ministry attests to the triangular relationship which, through the historical Jesus and "under the creative impact of the risen Lord and his Spirit,"[126] is now seen to include the epochal, perpetually persisting apostolic foundation.

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122 *Royal Priesthood,* 36-37.

123 *CAC I,* 33. "That is surely the real substance of the apostolic succession, continuity in the ministry of the Risen and Ever-Present Christ." Ibid., 214-15. Behind the continuity of the church's witness is the living continuity of the Word itself. Ibid., 218.

124 *CAC I,* 133. Torrance does not think that the precise form of the ministry can be read out of the New Testament, nor can a direct reading of form and order arise from the Eucharist. Ibid., 33; *CAC II,* 195; H. J. Wotherspoon and J. M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine according to the Church of Scotland*, rev. and ed. T. F. Torrance and Ronald Shelby Wright (London, Oxford University Press, 1954), 83. Yet, even a dominically appointed institution "cannot perpetuate in the continuity of space and time the risen Jesus Christ." *CAC I,* 46. In the nature of the case, given Torrance's architecture of the church, order is an outward and subordinate sign only. Nevertheless it is, for the Reformed, a *de fide* concern: "The Church and Ministry themselves belong to the articles of saving faith, so that for us the ministry is a *de fide* concern. *Credo unam sanctam ecclesiam.*" Ibid., 93.

125 *CAC II,* 26.

126 *Theological Dialogue,* 92.

V. Priesthood, Ministry, and Continuity

Torrance sees the Old Testament priesthood as having a double character reflected in Moses and Aaron. Moses is the unique mediator of the Word and, subordinate to him, is Aaron "the liturgical priest who carries out in continual cultic witness the actual mediation that came through Moses." Thus, the cultic priesthood is dependent upon the mediation of the Word.[127] Without obedience to the Word the cult becomes a mockery. When the priesthood became independent and perverse, "hardened by sin in the very use of the ordinances of grace," God would send the prophets who, in criticizing the cult, announced what Torrance calls "a prophetic and eschatological suspension of priestly liturgy" in light of the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18).[128] Ultimately, the temple, and Israel's false security in it, is destroyed (Jer. 7:1ff.).

After the exile, Torrance see the situation as hardened into what he calls "liturgized law and legalized liturgy." It is a situation where there is no room for the Word of God. Into this situation steps Jesus Christ, the Word of God, who fulfills both aspects of the priesthood: mediation of the Word of God to man and a perfect human response of atoning obedience to God.[129] He "forces the priesthood into its proper function as witness to the Truth."[130] Before we further explicate Christ's priesthood, let us briefly say a word about its implications for the issue of historical continuity.

As his baptism in response to John's eschatological preaching and his use of it as the ground of his authority over the temple (Luke 20:1-8) show, Jesus' ministry is not authenticated by existing ecclesial authority.[131] Indeed, pushing the matter further back, in his virgin birth there is both continuity with Israel's history and an eschatological disruption of that continuity from above.[132] After mentioning the virgin birth and its relation to Israel's history, Torrance connects it to Christ's priesthood:

Accordingly, one of the basic facts the New Testament has to tell us is that

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127 *Royal Priesthood,* 3-5.

128 Ibid., 5-7. *CAC I,* 121-122.

129 *Royal Priesthood,* 7; *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 113. Christ as both divinely provided redemption and flesh and blood sacrifice of obedience is adumbrated in the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. *Royal Priesthood,* 6.

130 Ibid., 9; *CAC I,* 121-122.

131 *CAC II,* 191.

132 *CAC I,* 212. For a fuller exploration of this see Kevin Chiarot, *The Unassumed Is the Unhealed: The Humanity of Christ in the Christology of T. F. Torrance* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 87-102.

> . . . the priestly continuity of the Aaronic succession was broken by another continuity that is without beginning and without end after the order of Melchizedek.[133]

This means that "the New Israel is not founded upon a priestly continuity on the stage of history but precisely upon the continuity of the prophetic-apostolic witness." Thus, there can be no purely linear continuity with Israel. Jesus Christ recapitulates and transcends the whole redemptive history of Israel. The church, then, has no socio-political or institutional continuity with Israel, but is rather is grafted into her "contrary to nature (Rom. 11:24)."[134] The apostles, themselves spanning the Old Israel and the New Israel, establish the foundation of the New Testament church and "provide it with its essential continuity with the one Church of God throughout the historico-redemptive activity of God's grace among men." Critically, Torrance continues, "this Hebrew rooting is an indispensable element in the proper conception of the Church's apostolic succession."[135]

While Torrance does not enlarge this point, his extensive writings on the church's relation to Israel indicate that he means at least two things. First, questions of historical continuity and schism must come to terms with the historical, yet not purely linear or institutional, manner in which Christ fulfills Israel's history and grafts the church into her. This means that ultimately unity is grounded in the covenant fulfilled in Jesus Christ.[136] Second, the schism between Israel and the church, inasmuch as it subsists in history, is theologically and not just historically prior to the intra-ecclesial division of the Christian era.[137] This reaffirms that, while giving the church her rooting in and (albeit historically imperfect) union with Israel, the manner of Christ's fulfilling and transcending Israel's history is the same frame in which the church's divisions are to be seen and addressed. In other words, Christological Eschatology, or the Christological "correction," is the appropriate medicine for addressing all the divisions of the one people of God throughout redemptive-history. [138]

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133 *CAC I,* 212.

134 Ibid., 212, 285-287. Torrance feels that the church's relation to Israel involves "some of the most difficult problems in our divisions." Ibid. 284.

135 Ibid., 299.

136 The covenant and God's faithfulness to it, grounds "the continuity of the Church in unbroken perpetuity from the beginnings of God's dealings with the race." Ibid., 95.

137 Ibid., 299.

138 Indeed, for Torrance, Israel's own jagged pre-Christian continuity points in this direction. Through the covenant with its attendant blessings and curses, its disruptions, its exile and restoration motifs, Torrance sees the adumbration of the church's historical continuity with the crucified and risen Christ. See the citation for footnote 50 above.

In the priesthood of Christ, then, "we pass beyond the conception of Aaronic priesthood to priesthood of another order."[139] He is priest "not on the ground of a legal ordinance but in a royal and sovereign way on the ground of his own endless Life."[140] In this new order of priesthood a number of distinctions are important. First, "priesthood cannot be predicated of Christ and of the Church univocally." He fulfills his ministry in a unique way and the church participates in his ministry in a correlative but entirely subordinate way.[141] The two priesthoods are not of the same genus, and the church's priesthood can in no way exercise control over Christ.[142] This means, again, that the "ordained ministry or priesthood is in no sense an extension of the priestly ministry of Christ or a prolongation of his vicarious work."[143]

Second, the New Testament does not apply the term "priest" (*hierus*) to the ordained ministry but only to Christ, and, in the plural, to the corporate priesthood of the church.[144] Paul uses priestly language in relation to the atonement, but mainly in reference to the "liturgy" of the Christian life. Christ is, the Epistle to the Hebrews tell us, the *Leitourgos* in the heavenly sanctuary. The whole church participates in its servant manner in his liturgical work (Acts 13:2; Rom. 15:16, 27; 2 Cor. 9:12; Phil. 2:17, 25).[145] Thus, Christian priestly ministry is primarily corporate. It is the work, the rational service, of the whole church as the Spirit-endowed body of the ascended Christ:[146]

> [T]he corporate nature of the Church's participation in Christ's ministry is extremely important for it affects our views both of order within the Church and of the continuity of the ministry. The corporate ministry of the Church and the ministry of Christ are related to each other, *not as the less to the greater, not as the part to the whole,* but *as the participation of the Church in the whole ministry of Christ.*[147]

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139 *Royal Priesthood,* 14.

140 *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 114.

141 *CAC I,* 251. Of course this is true of Christ's prophetic and kingly ministry as well. Torrance says the church's ministry is related to Christ's by substitutionary incorporation or substitutionary participation.

142 Ibid., 195.

143 *Royal Priesthood,* xv. By "in no sense" Torrance means in no non-analogical, univocal, purely historical sense.

144 Ibid., xv, 35.

145 Ibid., 15-17.

146 Ibid., 22.

147 Ibid., 36. Within the *koinonia* of the Spirit the ministry takes on an essentially corporate form. *Theological Dialogue,* 117; *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 118.

Third, because the church's participation in the ministry of Christ is fundamentally corporate, the ordained ministry (or priesthood), which arises out of the royal priesthood of the whole body, "has to be given primarily a corporate or collegial expression."[148] Thus, drawing on Calvin and Cyprian, Torrance argues for a corporate episcopate where, within the equality of ministers in presbytery, one of their number is set apart as bishop. This "political distinction of ranks," as Calvin called it, implies no hierarchy or dominion over the other presbyters, but rather is a kind of moderating presidency within the one episcopate held *in solidum* under Christ, the Chief Bishop.[149]

What is to be avoided here is a notion of hierarchy which views the church's ordained ministry as a kind of transcription of a heavenly pattern:

> . . . a hierarchic ordering . . . imports . . . a notion of monarchy which conflicts with the mode of connection which the members of the body have with one another. It gives the episcopate a mediatorial function independent of the Church as the Body of Christ. Such a notion of hierarchy strikes at the root of the corporate priesthood of the whole Church as the Body of Christ. It isolates the episcopate from the Body and makes the Body hang upon a self-perpetuating and self-sufficient institution.[150]

Even as the church's liturgy is not a transcription of the heavenly liturgy,[151] so her ministerial priesthood is not a transcription of the heavenly priesthood of Christ. The relation between the two is pneumatic and thus sacramental and eschatological. The ministry, as "temporary scaffolding," points beyond itself to the new creation where the corporate priesthood will endure but the corporate episcopate will pass away.[152]

Yet, the ministry still has an important role to play as a sign of the continuity of the whole body of Christ, a continuity historically mediated through baptismal incorporation into Christ and the ministry of Word and Sacrament. These three things together - baptismal incorporation, ministry of Word and Sacrament, and

148 *Royal Priesthood,* 36, 81. The theme is commonplace: *CAC I,* 67, 82, 101, 130, 138.

149 *Royal Priesthood,* 88-92; *CAC I,* 97. It is not our intention here to examine the details of Torrance's polity proposals. Our concern is with his basic theological architecture of continuity. Calvin, of course, viewed his position on this matter as in basic concord with the ancient church.

150 *Royal Priesthood,* 92.

151 "Thus the liturgical forms of earth, no matter how beautiful and adequate we may make them, are ever being judged as earthly by the New Song of Heaven, ever being rendered as fragmentary and revealed as essentially imperfect." Ibid., 96. See *CAC II,* 176.

152 *Royal Priesthood,* 96-97.

the episcopate as sign, all within the *koinonia* of the corporate priesthood of the body of the ascended and advent Christ built on the persisting apostolic foundation - form the full architecture of Torrance's conception of ecclesial continuity:

> This fully Christological interpretation of the continuity of the Church and its ministry cuts away from the bottom those false ideas and false notions of apostolic succession . . . and enables us to recover a true doctrine of apostolic succession in which both the corporate episcopate and the historic episcopate are given their proper place, as well as the priesthood of the whole baptized membership of the Church.[153]

VI. The Ministry of Word and Sacrament

An axiom of the Christological correction for the ordained ministry in the church is that the ministry is subordinate to, and has no authority over or apart from, what it ministers.[154] The Word is the supreme divine authority in the church, the scepter by which the risen and ascended Lord rules and governs his church.[155] Thus, the ministry must never displace or obscure the face of Christ or assume priority over the mighty acts of God in him. Doing so entails forgetting that "Christ clothed in His gospel" is ever present in the church, and that "his finished work is abiding and effective reality from generation to generation."[156] Ministerial succession in proclaiming the gospel, namely its use of the power of the keys, is upheld by Christ's own Word and Spirit. "The continuity of the ministry depends entirely upon that Word which is Christ's own Word and which he will unfailingly fulfill."[157]

Kerygma, which Torrance takes to be the act of preaching and the content of what is proclaimed,[158] is "preaching with an eschatological result, such that the original event, Christ incarnate, crucified and risen, becomes event all over again in the faith of the hearer." In this proclamation Christ himself, the incarnate and risen Word, is mightily at work,[159] and it is the Spirit of the risen Lord which is

153 *CAC I,* 138.

154 Ibid., 82, 88-89.

155 *CAC II,* 55. *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 120-121.

156 *CAC I,* 15; *CAC II,* 51.

157 *CAC I,* 29. "Behind the transmission and continuity of the witness there is the living continuity of the Word itself." Ibid., 218.

158 "It is such preaching that in it Jesus continues to do and to teach (Acts 1:1) what he had already begun before and after the Crucifixion." Ibid., 208. See *CAC II,* 158.

159 *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 119.

his *shaliach*, his personal representative, though the minister may be spoken of as representing Christ in a secondary sense.[160]

Thus, this "eschatological repetition,"[161] or soteriological replication, in the hearer means that the very proclamation of the gospel partakes of and exhibits the triangular relation which characterizes the whole of Torrance's Christological Eschatology. The preaching of the gospel drives us back to the apostolic foundation where the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:6), hid from the foundation of the world, is forever enshrined. Yet, the mystery itself is not transmitted; rather, through the preaching of the Word in the power of the eschatological Spirit, men are given to participate in it.[162] This entails time-relations, of course, for the church "extends the corporeality of the Word" in the world. Yet, because the Word which creates the church is never captured within the contingencies of history, these relations are sacramental and eschatological.[163] In the *kerygma* the church, driven back to the historical Christ, tastes of the powers of the age to come and stands already on the side of the resurrection.[164]

The Word and the sacraments are ordered such that without the Word made flesh there would no sacraments, yet the sacraments bring the Word to its proper fulfillment. Nevertheless, this fulfillment of Word and sacrament belongs to the already-not yet tension of history and awaits an eschatological consummation. The Word and the sacraments span the life of the church in the last days, "holding together the First Coming with the Final Coming in the one *parousia* of Him who was, who is, and who is to come."[165] In particular, the sacraments enshrine the continuity of the church's being in history[166] while simultaneously setting forth the eschatological tension of the church's time:

> The full consummation of the act is eschatological, but until Christ come, the sacrament holds together in one here and now the "*Son thy sins be forgiven thee,*" and . . . the "*Arise take up thy bed and walk*" (Mark 2:5, 10, 11). As

160 *CAC I,* 41-42; *CAC II,* 72.

161 Eschatological repetition is to be set over against merely linear temporal repetition where the cleric repeats the function of Christ's priesthood and the Eucharist repeats his sacrifice. *CAC I,* 42; *Incarnation,* 343.

162 *CAC I,* 218-219.

163 Ibid., 206-207.

164 *CAC II,* 158, 166. *Royal Priesthood,* 48.

165 Ibid., 63. Calvin makes the same point, see *Kingdom and Church,* 126. The Word, which is the ordering element in the church's life "fulfills its ordination in the celebration of the Sacraments." Together, Word and Sacrament imply a *charisma* of oversight (*episcope*). Ibid., 76.

166 Ibid., 70.

> long as we wait for the redemption of the body we have the sacraments, for it is the redemption of an already purchased possession that we wait for…The Parousia therefore will mean not so much the final consummation of the act in terms of linear time (though it must also mean that . . .), as the unveiling of a new creation which already in Christ is reality.[167]

More precisely, the two sacraments respectively enshrine the "once and for all" nature of our union with Christ, and its "eschatological repetition." Baptism does the former and the Lord's Supper (with its "as often as . . . until He come") the latter.[168] Broadly speaking, Torrance associates baptism with once-for-all justification and the Supper with ongoing sanctification.[169] This is the deepest theological rationale for there being just two sacraments. Together, the two dominical ordinances demonstrate "eschatological once-for-allness and eschatological continuity which come together in realized *wholeness* only when the teleological end (*telos*) and the eschatological end (*eschaton*) are fulfilled in one another at the Second Advent of Christ."[170]

Yet, Christian baptism, which Torrance sees as reposing on Christ's baptism in our place at the hands of John,[171] maintains a foundational significance. It is within baptismal incorporation that the Eucharist has its significance.[172] Baptism's relevance for our topic is that it makes visible nearly the whole array of themes we have sketched thus far:

> Let us have the full biblical teaching about Baptism as involving death and resurrection in Christ, and incorporation into His living Body, the sphere where the mighty salvation-events are operative by the power of the Word and Spirit

167 *CAC I,* 209.

168 Ibid., 41; *Incarnation,* 330.

169 *CAC I,* 47, 65-66, 258-260. Both sacraments are eschatological and have to do with the whole Christ. Yet, baptism emphasizes the completed, abiding reality, and the Supper its repeated eschatological insertion into our history. See *CAC II,* 146, 164; *Royal Priesthood,* 33; *Incarnation,* 338-339; *Space, Time, and Resurrection,* 150.

170 *CAC I,* 49. If baptism and the Supper are not held together properly, "the essential relation between the finished work and the future consummation tends to be radically misunderstood, as when the whole sacramental relation and operation is divided up into seven stages of increase in 'grace'." *CAC II,* 146. The relationship between Baptism and the Eucharist is upheld in the Word; it is a *kerygmatic* relation. Ibid., 156.

171 T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 82-105. Torrance links the baptism at the hands of John with the "baptism in blood" at the cross. Thus, Christ's whole incarnate atoning life and death grounds the church as the one Body of the Lord. We are baptized into the Baptized One. *CAC I,* 241-242; *CAC II,* 112-115, 128; *Royal Priesthood,* 34.

172 *CAC II,* 156.

> for our salvation, and we shall strike at the heart of many of our difficulties . . . not least in regard to the nature of the Church and Ministry, and their continuity.[173]

As such, no linear succession of bishops can "be made to usurp the function of Baptism, which is the supreme eschatological act whereby we are initiated into the once and for all historical events in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."[174] This is the sacramental coordinate of the continuity of the one body and the one priesthood of Christ which the whole church echoes. Baptism "is the primary eschatological act of the gospel whereby we are ingrafted into the wholeness of Christ."[175] Where this baptismal primacy is de-emphasized and stress is placed on the Eucharist and the need for episcopal ordination to administer it, "apostolic succession almost inevitably means the adding up of something in history, and the biblical doctrine of the Body of Christ as an all-inclusive eschatological magnitude tends to be lost."[176]

Thus, the sacraments – baptism and within baptismal incorporation the Eucharist – both point backward and forward and, like the Word, exist in the tension of the triangular relation.[177] With the *kerygma,* they belong to the eschatological reserve between the first and second Advents of Christ, and because of them the church is not simply suspended dialectically between these two moments.[178] They are neither mere attestations nor memorials nor historical repetitions, and the presence, the real *parousia* of Christ in them, always holds the final *parousia* in reserve.[179] In both, the essential mystery is hidden in and recedes from sight

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173 *CAC I,* 95.

174 Ibid., 199.

175 Ibid., 217. Baptism is our consecration to priesthood in Christ reposing on his prior self-consecration. *CAC II,* 37. See *Royal Priesthood,* 22.

176 *CAC I,* 217.

177 In what we might call a variation on the triangular relation, Torrance speaks of the church, by means of baptismal incorporation and the Eucharist, as a great arch spanning history supported by two pillars, the indivisible events of Christ's first and second Advents. The "on the night he was betrayed" and the "till he come" bind the two moments, past and future, together. *CAC II,* 170-171. See *Incarnation,* 301, 327.

178 *Royal Priesthood,* 48. In them the church is called to reach out to the *parousia*. Therefore, in the sacraments we are given clearest picture of the redemption of all things, time included. See also, Ibid., 63.

179 *CAC II,* 138-139. Indeed, there is in every Eucharist a point where the "real presence of the *Eschatos* suspends the liturgical action and makes it point beyond itself for validity and order." Ibid., 179. Every Eucharist involves "an eschatological suspension of historical continuity and the order and authority which that involves." Ibid., 190.

into the ascension.[180] By them we are incorporated and sustained in a wholeness which cannot, any more than the *parousia* of which they partake and to which they point, be subject to the time series of this age.[181]

Thus, Torrance holds, a strange inversion has occurred in the history of the church's reflection on matters of historical validity and continuity. In sublimating the eschatological dimension of the sacraments and seeking validity in some linear historical order, the church has sought a "validity reposing on the very thing the sacraments are designed to transcend." At the very place where the time of this age is invaded and its continuity transcended by an eschatological act of God, the validity of the act has been subjected to purely historical categories. The very existence of the sacraments, Torrance contends, should have prevented this. In the case of the Eucharist it has led to the irony that the very thing "designed as the medicine for our sinful divisions, has been made to rest so much for its validity upon chronological sequence within history that it has actually become the great obstacle to unity among the Churches." [182]

Yet the sacraments remain a medicinal judgement upon our divisions. In them the church's call to be conformed to the death and resurrection of Christ is perpetually enacted in her history in anticipation of the judgment and resurrection at the *parousia.*[183] The way of carrying about in the body the death of Jesus that the life of Jesus might be manifest is "the way of Baptism and Holy Communion."[184] To be baptized is to enter the sphere of both union and judgment, for it is the sacrament of Christ's obedience which displaces our disobedience.[185] "It is therefore through baptismal incorporation into Christ that our sinful divisions are brought under the mortification of the Cross and are destroyed in Christ." Baptism, then, through which the church is "given unity of the Spirit, a perfected reality to be kept," is the "primary enactment and expression of the oneness of the Church." Within that oneness through judgment

180 Ibid., 138-139, 167. See *Kingdom and Church,* 129-130.

181 *CAC II,* 26-27. "The whole significance of the sign is bound up with the fact that the ascension comes in between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his second Advent . . . The sacramental signs are charged with the real presence, but it is a presence which is also yet to come." Ibid., 161.

182 *CAC I,* 199. For this reason, among others, Torrance believes that intercommunion should be practiced now as a key portion of the road to unity rather than only as the finished result of unity. *CAC II,* 153-55, 191-202.

183 *CAC I,* 62.

184 Ibid., 245-246.

185 *CAC II,* 123.

the Eucharist is given as both the church's "agony and its supreme joy,"[186] so that continual death and resurrection in Christ might bring healing and reconciliation. The Eucharist does not add anything to the wholeness of baptismal incorporation, but it is a renewal, a re-insertion, of the Church's oneness as the Body of Christ into our divided humanity.[187] Thus, at the Supper, "we eat and drink judgment on our sin and division."[188]

Turning, then, to the question of division over orders, at the Lord's Supper the church "allows its order or historical structure to be called into question by that which comes from beyond history and is not expressible in terms of history alone."[189] In the nature of the case, the sacramental and eschatological relation which the Eucharist sustains to orders, namely its mediation of the presence of the Son of Man, the Lord of the Eucharist, means that the sacrament cannot be subordinated to the church's historical orders. In the triangular relation in which it subsists, it "stands above the institutional continuity of the Church and *can never be made relative to it.*"[190] In the Eucharist both the "*nomos*-form of historical succession" and the order the church derives from the risen Lord are both present. Here, then, the church must allow itself and its orders to be ordered and formed from above by the real presence of Christ. To abstract the order of the ministry from the real presence and action of the living Lord and then use it to judge the church or the validity of its ministry, Torrance says, "would be the essence of self-justification."[191] The judgment of the Eucharist must be allowed to break up the "hardened forms of the Church's Liturgy, into which eschatology is continually being transmuted,"[192] for in the "midst of history with all its divisions and heart-rending failures," the Supper proclaims and enacts a unity which is eschatologically validated.[193]

The eschatological triangular relation, then, in relativizing linear notions of continuity and unity, also provides the very frame out of which they come under redemptive judgment. The church's unity, and the holy assault on the irrational disruptions of that unity, both come from the future, from the power of the age to come, from the one all-inclusive *parousia* of the *eschatos Adam.*

186 Ibid., 172-173.

187 *CAC I,* 259-261, 267, 274; *CAC II,* 168, 171.

188 *CAC I,* 278.

189 *CAC II,* 196.

190 Ibid., 197-198; *Royal Priesthood,* 106.

191 *Royal Priesthood,* 71-72.

192 *CAC II,* 197-199.

193 Ibid., 200-202.

That future, the presence of the new creation anchored in the midst of the world's estrangement and veiled by the eschatological pause the ascension creates in the one *parousia* of Christ, is enshrined in the holy sacraments.[194]

VII. Conclusion

We have attempted to demonstrate that in Torrance we find a consistent, integrated dogmatics of ecclesial continuity. The shorthand designation for this is Christological Eschatology. But, as we have seen, that Christological Eschatology unfolds into a large and coherent architectural whole. The inner heart of this Christological Eschatology is the work of the Spirit of the incarnate crucified, risen, ascended and advent Lord. Through the Spirit of the *eschatos Adam*, the church is united to that Christ as one body and one royal priesthood. It is in that union that her true *esse* and her abiding continuity persist. Thus, she is a concrete historical entity, but not merely so, for she is an "eschatological magnitude." She lives out of another time, from another order, and as such she is the new creation in the midst of history's divisions and trauma.

Her time, then, is the time of this age as it is invaded by the power of the age to come. While a precise description of just what the age to come does to "this present evil" age is elusive, *that* it disrupts the church's continuity from being a purely historical phenomenon is plain. It creates what we have called, following Torrance, the triangular relation. Put simply, the ascended Christ drives the church back to the historical Christ where she meets the ascended Christ. Yet, clearly this is not the fullest form of expressing the mystery. While Torrance never attempts a complete statement, the full explication of his teaching would yield a more robust statement and indicate the complexity involved:

> In fallen time (already invaded by the new time) the church meets the One who, having entered fallen time as an eschatological intrusion (the first advent of the one indivisible *parousia*), is now risen and ascended and exists in the new time of eschatological glory. And that One drives the church back to another time, the apostolic foundation, which itself, while fully historical, is the product of the first advent of Christ, his historical life, death, and resurrection, *and* the gift of the eschatological Spirit of that same Christ once ascended. There the church meets the ascended *and* coming Christ in the already-not-yet tension, the eschatological pause between the two moments of the one indivisible parousia.

Of course this could be stated differently, but its very cumbersomeness supports Torrance's oft-repeated claims that the church does not live by linear historical

194 Ibid., 163-164.

order alone. Having, from all angles, approached this mysterious time of the church, Torrance also sets forth the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments as remarkably knitted into, displaying, and upholding this multi-faceted triangular order. There is a genuinely provocative and stimulating dogmatic contribution in the seamlessness by which this architecture of continuity moves from Christological Eschatology, to the Spirit, to the one body of Christ, and finally, to the Word and the Sacraments. The resultant case regarding the church's *esse* and continuity, and the corollary that orders are relative and ambiguous scaffolding, is strong. And the arguments against at least some traditional notions of apostolic succession are also weighty. It is precisely because Torrance's case does not rest on a piece of exegesis here and a piece of historical evidence there but upon a Christologically determined theology of ecclesial continuity that it has such force.

What, we ask in closing, would it take to rigorously reply to Torrance? One suggestion is that, perhaps, he overplays his hand on the notion of orders, or any ecclesial-juridical forms and acts, as partaking of the *schemata,* the *stoicheia* of the age. While he acknowledges that one can use the *schema* without being schematized to them, his criticisms and cautions here are applied only to orders. Yet it is clear from the New Testament that the whole life of the church, and any aspect of that life, can be conformed or schematized to this age and its elemental principles. While there may be more of a temptation in questions of order given that, for Torrance, law itself is often viewed as part of the form and fashion of this age, the problem is not restricted to the matter of order. Torrance would be better off, we contend, by not coupling his critique to this *schemata/stoicheia* polemic so tightly. He himself points the way when he says that even a dominically appointed institution cannot perpetuate the church's essential continuity in the risen Christ. In other words, even granting a divinely given ministerial order, it would still be, on Torrance's reading, a subordinate sign of the inner reality of the church's continuity in Christ. It could not, in the theological structure Torrance has enumerated, secure or guarantee the church's apostolic succession.

What would be needed, then, is a notion that ministerial orders themselves, not simply as a sign but in their essence, partake of and exhibit the Christological Eschatology which grounds ecclesial continuity even as the Word and the Sacraments do. Put differently, orders would have to be shown not simply to point to the triangular relation which defines the church's time but also to intrinsically belong to the triangular relation. This is, we think, a tall order. It entails more than the fact that the baptized and communing body belongs to

the triangular relation. Ministers, of course, belong to the triangular relation. But do ministerial orders *per se* do anything more than point to it? Even if orders could be shown somehow to have the same eschatological characteristics as Word and Sacrament, as what they minister, it would still remain to show that the validity and continuity of the one depended on the other.[195] What is clear is that Torrance has made a biblical and formidable contribution to the discussion.

195 One can get a small taste for how the conversation here might go by reading the correspondence between Torrance and Florovsky in Matthew Baker, "The Correspondence between T. F. Torrance and Georges Florovsky (1950-1973)," in *T. F. Torrance and Eastern Orthodoxy: Theology in Reconciliation*, eds. Matthew Baker and Todd Speidell (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 286-324. Baker notes that, in contrast to what he calls Torrance's "negative dialectic" between history and eschatology, Florovsky holds that the church simply is "a 'proleptic eschatology' constituted in the sacraments . . ." Ibid., 288. This seems to indicate, perhaps, the direction we suggested above. The episcopal succession simply is, in its association with the Eucharist, a decisive part of the eschatological triangular relation. As Baker puts it: "*Through the historic episcopate*, each local church is inserted into the eschatological community of the Twelve and the Jerusalem Church, the reconstituted Israel." Ibid., 288-289, italics mine.

EXTENDING THE SACRAMENTS TO CHILDREN:

Insights from the Theology of T. F. Torrance

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Abstract: *This article explores T. F. Torrance's theology of the sacraments as it relates to the ecclesiological question of the inclusion of children in the worshipping community. Part I defines worship dialogically with reference to the person and work of Christ. The sacraments provide the context to discuss humanity's participation in the dialogue in Trinitarian terms. Part II considers the implications with respect to questions regarding a child's faith and knowledge. In conclusion, the article proposes how Torrance might answer the pastoral concerns outlined at the outset, and suggests further questions that might be asked in the desire to be inclusive with integrity.*

The Context

In the present UK context, it is not uncommon to have a full church on the occasion of a christening for a local family. Those who champion the theological soundness of infant baptism may be uneasy with its practice as a cultural phenomenon. Part of the unease rests in the realization that many such families do not come back. Despite the baptismal vows they make on behalf of their children, the parents do not intend to be regularly involved in any church community.[1]

The situation presents some obvious pastoral concerns. Does the church have a responsibility or duty of care to gauge parents' and godparents' commitment to the promises they will be asked to make, promises to pray for their children

1 For a recent discussion of this issue, see David F. Wright's Didsbury Lectures 2003, *What Has Infant Baptism Done to Baptism: An Enquiry at the end of Christendom* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005).

and draw them by example into the community of faith? In the absence of family involvement, how does a church support and help a family to uphold vows to nurture the child's faith – vows that both the family *and* the church make?

Perhaps less obvious are the questions relating to the relationship between the sacraments, or those pertaining to the nurture of children who *are* regularly involved in their worshipping community. In many churches, young children are not permitted to participate fully in the Eucharist. Is there a disconnect here, in making one sacrament readily available to any child, but withholding another sacrament? Does or should it make a difference if the child is a fully participant member in her or his church community? What role do or should the sacraments play in the nurture of a child's faith? How might a church work through these and other related issues in a way that is both inclusive and integrous?

T. F. Torrance's theology was firmly rooted in his pastoral heart and ministry.[2] This article seeks to find resources in the theology of the Torrances,[3] though particularly from T. F., to begin to answer these concerns. It draws on the Torrances' doctrine of Trinitarian worship to help foster a theologically sound vision of children's participation in worship. And it asks if T. F.'s belief that the Church is the place where all barriers are abolished holds promise for the inclusion of children with respect to the sacraments.[4]

The broader context of this discussion is the theology of worship and the dynamic between God's action and humanity's response. It is written from a Wesleyan perspective that is suspicious of any theology that seems not to have adequate room for human response, yet also wary of worship that – in the phrase often repeated by the Torrances – "throws us back on ourselves". In the Torrances, one finds a remedy that allays both fears. It is articulated in another oft-used expression: our part is a "response to the Response".

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2 As Anderson argues, "despite the often rather obscure syntax and concepts in his writing, the theology of Thomas Torrance was deeply rooted in the church, its ministry and its mission in the world," Ray S. Anderson, "The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance," *Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*, Vol 1 (2009): 49. See also Thomas Torrance, *Gospel, Church, and Ministry*, ed. Jock Stein (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), particularly the first chapter on Torrance's parish ministry where Torrance speaks of the power of the Gospel in the lives of his parishioners.

3 When making reference to "Torrance" throughout this article, I am referring to T. F. Torrance; otherwise I will include first names.

4 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), 360.

Part I. The Theology Underlying Torrance's Doctrine of the Sacraments

How Shall We Worship?

In recent years, worship renewal has captured imaginations within and across traditions and denominations. Listening to others has resulted in enriching cross-fertilization. The desire to put worship back in the hands of the people has reclaimed the meaning of liturgy and helped to affirm the dialogical nature of worship.[5] Worship is more than Godward activity in which the people of God extol and praise him. Rather the "work" is a response, one that follows God's initiative and invitation. The pattern of communal worship mirrors the pattern of God's economic activity in his creation: God speaks and creation answers in what becomes a relational song, complete with its dissonance and resolution. We can speak of this dialogue in terms of a humanward (God to humankind) and a Godward (humankind to God) movement.

This affirmation of dialogue is healthy. In any conversation, it is frustrating when one person can never get a word in, or answers without listening to what another has said.[6] If God's eternal purpose is to draw humanity into the communion that he is in his very being, and if worship shapes the community of faith – the *ecclesia* – it makes sense for worship to be relational in its expression. How, then, can we articulate a theology of worship that at once embraces humanity's part in the conversation, yet does not engender a weariness that results from, as the Torrances say, "being thrown back on ourselves"?

The Torrances argue that much worship does engender weariness. In his book, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*, James Torrance[7] argues that the most common and widespread view of worship is that it is something that "we" do. Jesus taught us and gave us an example of how to do it. God's grace is needed to help us in our efforts, but it is, essentially, what *we* do before God:

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5 See, for example, Robert Webber, *Worship is a Verb: Eight Principles for Transforming Worship* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996). Or David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Leicester: Apollos, 1992).

6 It is worth noting that this is different from not liking what someone may have to say to you. Corporate worship is not only the opportunity to praise God and receive assurance; it can also be the time when we are challenged, even to our discomfort. Indeed, if the Psalms are anything to go by, it is also when we may cry out to God in anger or despair.

7 I am referencing James Torrance here because of the clear way he outlines different views and corresponding models of worship in his Didsbury Lectures – particularly the Unitarian view and its corresponding existential model; however, T. F.'s affirmation of Trinitarian worship is equally strong and runs throughout the corpus of his work.

"We go to church, we sing our psalms and hymns to God, we intercede for the world, we listen to the sermon (too often simply an exhortation), we offer our money, time and talents to God."[8] This view, he argues, is Unitarian because it has no doctrine of the mediation of Christ and no proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

James Torrance calls this the existential, present-day experience model where faith means contemporary immediacy. While Christians believe that their experience is grounded in what happened two thousand years ago, it is *their* experience that is now central. The fundamental flaw of this model is that it separates Christ's work from his person:

> Stressing the work of Christ at the expense of his person, can reduce the gospel to 'events' with no ontology (separate act and being) and make our religious experience of grace central. As Bonhoeffer saw, we are then more interested in the blessings of Christ than Jesus Christ himself. It is a failure not to recognize that salvation is not simply through the work of Christ (*per Christum*) but primarily given to us in his person (*in Christo*).[9]

This model emphasizes *our* faith, *our* decision, and *our* response in a way that "short-circuits the vicarious humanity of Christ and belittles union with Christ."[10] It is, he argues, an exhausting model to inhabit because instead of proclaiming a gospel of grace, it throws Christians back on themselves to make an appropriate response to God.[11]

Speaking in terms of the movements of worship, the problem occurs when what God does is understood solely in terms of the humanward movement, which leaves the Godward movement entirely in our hands to make. God speaks, and we are left to figure out and make the adequate response.

The Sacraments: What *We* Do or What *God* Does?

How does this relate to the sacraments? Different sacramental practices often indicate a belief as to who is central in the conversation. Advocating infant baptism often indicates a belief that baptism is primarily about what God is doing in initiating someone into the community of faith. Favoring believer's baptism[12]

8 James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 7.

9 Ibid., 16.

10 Ibid., 18.

11 Ibid., 7, 18.

12 Here I am thinking particularly of those who advocate believer's baptism *in opposition*

usually indicates the view that baptism is primarily an affirmation of faith; that is, a response to what God has already done, or a personal testimony of one's faith.

Torrance strongly affirms that the sacraments are about what *God* is doing, not what we are doing. He distances himself from any understanding of baptism as a subjective affirmation of faith. In this, he could not be clearer. He makes the point both with reference to the Church, who baptizes, and the one being baptized:

> While baptism is both the act of Christ and the act of the Church in his Name, it is to be understood finally not in terms of what the Church does but in terms of what God in Christ has done, does, and will do for us in the Spirit. Its meaning does not lie in the rite itself and its performance, *nor in the attitude of the baptized and his obedience of faith*.[13]

> As an ordinance, then, baptism sets forth not what we do, nor primarily what the Church does to us, but what God has already done in Christ, and through His Spirit continues to do in and to us. . . . Our part is only to receive it.[14]

> Baptism is thus not a sacrament of what we do but of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, in whom he has bound himself to us and bound us to himself, *before we could respond to him*.[15]

The same emphasis is clear in Torrance's theology of the Eucharist. It is both the act of Christ and the act of the Church in his name, but the latter serves the former:[16] "The Eucharist is not to be regarded as [an] independent act on our part in response to what God has already done for us in Christ."[17]

How does this relate to the movements of worship? It may seem that infant baptism corresponds primarily to the humanward movement and believer's baptism corresponds primarily to the Godward movement. Framed that way, it looks like an option of one movement or the other. It may, therefore, seem

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to infant baptism. It is possible to affirm both. For example, someone who affirms the soundness of infant baptism must nevertheless allow for and affirm the baptism of adults for whom there was no opportunity to be baptized as infants.

13 Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays towards Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), 84. Emphasis mine.

14 Ibid., 87-8.

15 Ibid., 103. Emphasis mine. See also Thomas F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Volume II* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959), 123. (Hereafter referred to as *C&A, II.*)

16 Torrance, *Reconciliation*, 107.

17 Ibid., 109.

that in arguing that the sacraments are about what *God* is doing, Torrance is not interested in articulating them in the context of worship that is dialogical in nature. Yet when his understanding of the sacraments is viewed in the context of his larger theological program, we see that framing the issue in this way is too simplistic – particularly as it relates to what God is doing.

A Mediated Response – Christ, the Objective Ground

It would be a mistake to read Torrance's argument as a rejection of dialogue. Far from it. The belief that the sacraments are primarily about what *God* does is not one that excludes the necessity of human response – the musical answer to the melody. Torrance is *not* arguing for a humanward action without its Godward counterpart. When Torrance speaks about what God is doing, he is referring to his *saving* action. In the context of a discussion on the Eucharist, he states:

> But this saving work is not simply a mighty act of God done upon us. In order to fulfil its end in restoring human being to proper sonship in the image of God it has to be translated into terms of human life and activity. Hence the Son of God came not simply to act *in* a man but *as man*. . . . Both this manward and this Godward movement in the saving work of Christ are essential, for neither is what it is without the other. . . . The saving reality with which we are concerned here is the two-fold but indivisible activity of God, of God as God upon man and of God as man towards himself, the movement of saving love which is at once from the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, and to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit.[18]

The Godward response of faith *is* therefore essential. But it is one that *Christ* makes, in which *our* part is articulated as participation. Torrance's theology of the sacraments is firmly rooted in their *objective* ground – Christ.[19]

In his discussion of Torrance's doctrine of the Church, Kye Won Lee states: "What is of primary importance [for Torrance] is not ecclesiology, but Christology."[20] The objective ground of Christ is the central recurring theme in Torrance's oeuvre. It undergirds every argument and ensures that we do not separate Christ's work from his person. This prevents us from conceiving a "benefit of Christ" that

18 Ibid., 117-18.

19 As Alexis Torrance notes, "all subjective readings [of baptism] are viewed, it appears, with the utmost suspicion." See "The Theology of Baptism in T. F. Torrance and its Ascetic Correlate in St. Mark the Monk," *Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship* Vol 4 (2013): 152.

20 Kye Won Lee, *Living in Union with Christ: The Practical Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 227.

can be abstracted from him.[21] For Torrance, discussions about the Church focus not on the *Church* itself, but Christ. Discussions about union with Christ focus not on the *union* itself, but Christ. And likewise with the sacraments. In both baptism and the Eucharist, the focus is not the *rite*, but Christ. Why? Because, as Torrance repeatedly argues, none of these things have any meaning or, indeed reality, apart from Christ who objectively grounds them.[22]

Each of these – the Church, union, baptism, Eucharist – has to do with humanity's relationship with God through Christ by the Spirit. They relate to God's economy – his interaction with his creation. The key, for Torrance, is that there can be no interaction apart from Christ. This also means that there can never be any meaningful talk about such interaction apart from Christ. Torrance articulates this most thoroughly in the context of the vicarious humanity of Christ, a doctrine that undergirds every other doctrine.[23]

The Movements of Worship in Christ

Central in Torrance's theology as a whole is the theme of the two inseparable movements within the person of Christ the Mediator. These movements relate to the humanward and Godward movements of worship. The key, for Torrance, is that *both movements are fulfilled in Christ.* Because he is both divine and human, he is both the Word of God to humanity and humanity's response to God. Our understanding of the dialogue at the heart of worship is analogous to our understanding of the hypostatic union. In Christ, we are not confronted by two realities – a divine and a human – joined or combined together but by the "one Reality who confronts us as he who is both God and man": God *as* man, not God *in* man.[24] So too, then, the movements of worship are distinct, but inseparably one in Christ.

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21 Essentially, this is the flaw of the existential model of worship – Christians believe heartily in a gospel of grace, but they understand it in terms of an event (cross/resurrection) that took place in the past. It is relevant as a past, finished work to which they can respond in the present.

22 One could substitute "ontologically" for "objectively." For Torrance, "terms like 'realist,' 'unitary,' 'ontological,' 'objective,' 'rational,' 'personal,' 'organic' and 'scientific' are nearly synonymous and used interchangeably." Lee, 296.

23 It even undergirds those doctrines that do not speak of God's relation with us. Our knowledge of the immanent Trinity is through the economic Trinity. We come to know who God is – not just in relation to us, but in his own self – through Christ, the one who reveals God to us. This does not mean the immanent Trinity is reduced to the economic, but simply that "God is not other than he is in the history of Jesus Christ," Paul D. Molnar, "The Centrality of the Trinity in the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance," *Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*, Vol 1 (2009): 87.

24 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 56.

It is from this that Torrance argues vehemently against any doctrine that separates being (person) and act (event). The movements of worship do not just take place in the action of Christ, but in his very being. Or, to put it more strongly, they take place in the action of Christ *because* they take place in Christ himself. Christ's saving action is the working out of his person in the context of the Incarnation: "What he does is not separate from his personal Being and what he is in his own incarnate Person *is* the mighty Act of God's love for our salvation."[25] The hypostatic union that occurs in the Incarnation is, at once, a reconciling union because Christ assumes fallen humanity. For Torrance, then, incarnation and atonement are inseparably related: "This is a union which is projected, as it were, into the actual conditions of our estranged humanity where we are in conflict with God, so that the hypostatic union operates as a reconciling union in which estrangement is bridged, conflict eradicated, and human nature taken from us is brought into perfect sanctifying union with divine nature in Jesus Christ."[26]

The life that Christ lives in the Spirit is a sanctifying life which perfects human life in and through living it. Because he sanctifies the life that he assumes, his life is one of continuous reconciliation worked out through daily obedience to the Father. For Torrance, this is about both person and act: the one who is consubstantial with the Father lives out this unity *as a human*. This unity is revealed as obedience through the power of the Spirit, the same Spirit who makes the Father and Son one in being *and* will.[27] Furthermore, this union does not come to an end; Jesus – in his bodily, human ascension – takes our perfected humanity to the right hand of the Father where he continues to be our Intercessor and Advocate.[28]

This Godward movement of obedience is a "yes" to the will of the Father. Because it is worked out in the context of humanity that has said "no," the atonement has both a retrospective and a prospective side. It at once saves humanity *from* sin (retrospective) and also saves humanity *to* life (prospective).

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25 Ibid., 63.

26 Ibid., 65.

27 For Torrance's indebtedness to Irenaeus of Lyons, see Matthew Baker, "The Place of St. Irenaeus of Lyons in Historical and Dogmatic Theology According to Thomas F. Torrance," *Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*, Vol 2 (2010): 21ff. Baker states: "Torrance's notion of the vicarious humanity of Christ […] must be regarded as a major restatement of the Irenaean doctrine of recapitulation," 42. Particularly interesting is Baker's reference to Irenaeus' emphasis on the fact that Christ sanctified "every age," 31-2.

28 Torrance, *Mediation*, 73.

This is life in all its fullness, or the "yes" which is life in communion with God.[29]

The doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ, therefore, informs Torrance's theology of worship, and particularly, the sacraments. As Anderson states, "the whole of Christ's life of obedience, prayer and worship thus becomes the objective and ontological basis for the Christian's life of faith. The church, as the body of Christ, participates in Christ's on-going ministry of revelation and reconciliation."[30] When we speak of the dialogue of worship, we understand that the Godward movement of response has already been given in and made by Christ. *Our* part is therefore a response to *the* Response, or – as Torrance often frames it – our "liturgical Amen" to what God has done for us in Christ through the Spirit. He states: "As the real text of God's Word addressed to us, Jesus is also the real text of our address to God. We have no speech or language with which to address God but the speech and language called Jesus Christ."[31]

Against Dualism: Mediated Movement in the Context of the Sacraments

Those familiar with Torrance know that he dedicates much of his theological program to undoing the damage done by dualistic thinking. There is a proper duality when thinking of God and creation – they are distinct; one is not the other.[32] Dualism, however, is the view that because of this proper distinction, there can be no direct relation between them. Dualism holds that because God *qua* God cannot engage directly with creation, and creation *qua* creation cannot engage directly with God, the Incarnation is an impossibility. Christ can only be human, so the best we can hope for is that he is the ideal human who can be our example. Or Christ can only be divine, so although he may seem a lot like us he does not share our humanity in any real or complete way; the best we can hope for is that he has some answers. In the first, the problem is that we do not have the capacity to follow. In the second, we may have answers, but from someone who does not and indeed *cannot* know the problem.

Only an account of the Incarnation in which Christ is both our substitute and our

29 Here Torrance is indebted to John McLeod Campbell's articulation of the retrospective and prospective aspects of salvation. See, for example, John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, reprint ed. 1996).

30 Anderson, 58.

31 Torrance, *Mediation*, 78-9.

32 Torrance is as clear in his affirmation of a proper duality as he is in his rejection of radical dualism. See Robert J. Stamps, *The Sacrament of the Word Made Flesh: The Eucharistic Theology of Thomas F. Torrance* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2007), 30ff.

representative – neither to the exclusion of the other – can counteract a dualistic framework.[33] If the atonement is a pure act of God without our incorporation, Christ is only our substitute; the atonement remains external to us. If, in Christ, *God* is not acting, then Christ can only be a representative, giving us an example to follow. Torrance considers the hypotheticals. If Jesus is not Mediator but only a created intermediary, then he cannot forgive sins. His words of forgiveness would simply be "a kindly sentiment." And any answer to the question, "Is God really like Jesus?" would only be a guess. Furthermore, if the love of God falls short of becoming one with us, "we are left with a dark inscrutable Deity behind the back of Jesus Christ of whom we can only be terrified."[34] In the final analysis, Jesus' relationship with God can only be defined in moral terms, and as followers of his example, the Church is nothing more than a group gathering to engage with socio-ethical issues.[35]

In the context of the sacraments, Torrance discusses this in terms of the relationship between the Gift and the Giver, or the Offering and the Offerer. Dualism results in the Gift being detached from the Giver; there can be no *self*-giving of God in Jesus. Likewise, the Offering is detached from the Offerer; there can be no *unique* or *vicarious* offering, but only an exemplary form of our own. In both cases we are "thrown back upon ourselves" as both "receivers over against the Giver" or as effectors of our own "Pelagian" mediation.[36]

It is, Torrance argues, a dualistic understanding of the relation between God and the world that has deeply affected the understanding of the sacraments in the Western Church. This is evident, for example, in traditions where:

> . . . the real presence and the eucharistic sacrifice are essentially symbolic and spiritual pointing to heavenly realities beyond, which demand of us liturgical response on earth, and of interpretations of the real presence and the eucharistic sacrifice in terms of the once for all self-offering of Christ on the Cross and in the Ascension calling mainly for *ethical acts on our part as the appropriate mode of response here and now*.[37]

Torrance sums it up thus: "Whenever the Eucharist has been set within a dualist context, whether that be Augustinian-Neoplatonic, Augustinian-Aristotelian or Augustinian-Newtonian, its meaning tends to be found either in the *rite itself and*

33 Ibid., 105ff.

34 Torrance, *Mediation*, 57-9.

35 Ibid., 61-2. See also 71.

36 Torrance, *Reconciliation*, 131-4.

37 Ibid., 129.

its performance or the inward and moral experience of the participant."[38]

Particularly interesting is the historical development in the Church's worship in reaction to Arianism. In an effort to reaffirm Christ's divinity, the emphasis on his humanity was lost. The Church's liturgy reflected the development, which Graham Redding helpfully summarizes:[39]

> While these liturgical changes were perfectly understandable under the circumstances, they had a most unfortunate and unforeseen effect…As the mediatorship and humanity of Christ faced into the background and Christ was thrust up into the majesty and grandeur of the Godhead, a gap emerged and came to yawn large in Christian thinking between the eternal God and sinful humanity. The worshipper was confronted immediately with the overwhelming majesty of the triune God. 'Stress was now placed not on what unites us to God (Christ as one of us in his human nature, Christ as our brother), but on what separates us from God (God's infinite majesty).'[40]

The point of interest is that whichever nature – either humanity or divinity – a Christology marginalizes or excludes because of an underlying dualism, worshippers end up in a similar place: having to make their own response.

The view that the sacraments are primarily about what *we* do may affirm a role for humanity in the dialogue of worship. Nevertheless, it is misguided because its underlying theology does not, in fact, *allow* engagement. The converse of God not coming near to us in Christ (the effect of dualism) means that he remains *distant* and we cannot come near to him. Worship, then, is not about relationship; it is reduced to subjective morality or experience, or worship in *fear*, not in the Spirit.

Trinitarian Worship: "How Shall We Worship?" Revisited

This brings us back to the heart of the issue. Torrance's articulation of the vicarious humanity of Christ lays the groundwork for a meaningful understanding of worship as participation. It is not unusual to read Torrance and ask, "what then of the *response* to the Response?" One will search in vain for an articulation

38 Ibid., 131. Emphasis mine.

39 The change in the liturgy is charted extensively by Joseph Jungmann in his influential work, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, trans. A. Peeler, Second English ed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989). Torrance is indebted to this work in his essay, "The Mind of Christ in Worship: The Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy," in *Reconciliation*, 139-214.

40 Graham Redding, *Prayer and the Priesthood of Christ in the Reformed Tradition* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 20. Cf. Jungmann, 251.

of the small "r" response that is not ontologically rooted in Christ.[41] Regarding the two-way movement of worship, Lee states: "This whole movement has been finally accomplished in Jesus Christ. *If we misunderstand this, all will collapse in Torrance's theology*."[42] Lee believes the "I-yet-not-I-but-Christ" of Galatians 2:20 captures the essence of Torrance's theology; it is his "linchpin."[43]

Nevertheless, Torrance *does* speak of the "subjective actualization" of the upward movement in humanity which he locates in the gift of the Spirit.[44] Torrance always articulates both movements of worship in a Trinitarian way: from the Father to us through Christ by the Spirit, and to the Father from us through Christ by the Spirit. Against those who criticize him for an overemphasis on Christology to the neglect of pneumatology, Lee states: "The Spirit is the hero behind the curtain of Torrance's theological stage."[45] The Spirit "actualizes" our union with Christ; without the Spirit, there would be no Christ *for* us:

> The 'objective' union which we have with Christ through his incarnational assumption of our humanity into himself is 'subjectively' actualized in us through his indwelling Spirit, 'we in Christ' and 'Christ in us' thus complementing and interpenetrating each other. In other words, there takes place a relation of mutual indwelling between Christ and the Church which derives from and is grounded in the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Holy Trinity.[46]

The key for Torrance is that the small "r" response, or our "Amen" to the worship of Christ, does not *add* anything; it is not something "new".[47] Union with Christ

41 One could indeed describe Torrance's theological program as a project dedicated to rooting out any hint or whisper of Pelagianism.

42 Lee, 308. Emphasis mine.

43 Ibid., 218, 301.

44 Torrance, *Atonement*, 368. It is important to note here that Christ, in his vicarious humanity, *also* receives the gift of the Spirit. The means of our participation (by the Spirit) is such because it is first the way for Christ. Here also is an example of how the economic Trinity reveals the immanent Trinity. See Torrance, *Mediation*, 54ff.

45 Lee, 316. See also Stamps: "The interjection of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit at any point in Torrance's theology always introduces with it the idea of participation," 116.

46 Torrance, *Mediation*, 66-7.

47 Torrance articulates this in his ecclesiology by arguing that the Church is not an extension of the Incarnation; it never substitutes for Christ. See Torrance, *C&A, II,* 83; *Atonement*, 369; Lee, 227ff. Torrance states: "Incorporation into Christ can be regarded on the one hand as the subjective actualization in us through the Spirit of the objective revelation and reconciliation fulfilled in the incarnation and the atonement. *Yet this is not something in addition to the finished work of Christ*, but rather that same work effectively operative in the church," *Atonement*, 368 (emphasis mine). He reiterates this in terms

is never articulated in terms of "identity," but "sharing," or being drawn up into something that has already and is already taking place.[48] Stamps summarizes it well:

> The Eucharist [as] a 'response to the Response' of Christ can . . . be more deeply understood, not just as our response to something spiritually observed or overheard, not merely as our liturgical attempt to reply to Christ's worship, but rather as a response in the form of actual participation by the Spirit in Christ's response for us, or 'a response *within* a response'. Gathered by the Spirit within that perfect response of Christ, then, the Church is given to share in a worship which transcends all her natural capacities.[49]

This is a vision of Trinitarian worship. James Torrance articulates it in contrast to the bankrupt Unitarian view and its corresponding existential/experiential model of worship. Trinitarian worship offers an understanding of our response in terms of *participation* in what has already been done and is being done on our behalf:

> [Trinitarian] worship is . . . our participation through the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father, in *his* vicarious life of worship and intercession. It is our response to our Father for all that he has done for us in Christ. . . . The real *agent* in all true worship is Jesus Christ. He is our great High Priest and ascended Lord, *the one true worshipper* who unites us to himself by the Spirit in an act of memory and in a life of communion, as he lifts us up by word and sacrament into the very triune life of God.[50]

For the Torrances, worship is a gift: "God our Father in the gift of his Son and the gift of the Spirit, gives us what he demands – the worship of our hearts and minds. He lifts us up out of ourselves to participate in the very life and communion of the Godhead, that life of communion for which we were created."[51] Worship, then, is not just an expression of that relationship but is, itself, ontological.

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of regeneration, which is the effect of Christ's birth and resurrection upon us, "yet not effect in the sense of a different and subsequent event. Our regeneration has already taken place and is fully enclosed in the birth and resurrection of Christ, and proceeds from them more by way of manifestation of what has already happened than a new effect resulting from them." This is sacramentally enacted in baptism, which is the sign and seal of regeneration. See Torrance, *C&A, II*, 131.

48 Lee, 206. Note, also, that this sharing is never articulated as synergy.

49 Stamps, 129.

50 James Torrance, *Worship*, 3, 5. Emphasis mine.

51 Ibid., 9.

The Place of the Sacraments in "Subjective Actualization"

In Jesus we have the "final response of man toward God" and the "covenanted way of vicarious response to God which avails for all of us and in which we may all share through the Spirit of Jesus Christ which he freely gives us."[52] The sacraments are about incorporation into this reality.[53] The sacraments are signs, but only if by "sign" we mean "essentially event," for the sacraments are "the worldly form which the Christ-event assumes in action, the point at which Revelation embodies itself actively in history."[54]

Baptism incorporates us into the once-for-all nature of the Christ-event; in the Eucharist, we are upheld by the continual, enduring nature of this event. Torrance is adamant that these are inseparably related. In this way they are analogous to the two-way movement of the hypostatic union. He speaks of "two essential 'moments' in the one whole relation of the Church to Christ, one 'moment' speaking of the once and for all participation in what Christ has once and for all done, and the other 'moment' speaking of our continual renewal in that perfected reality in Christ Jesus."[55]

Torrance locates the reason for two sacraments in his doctrine of eschatology. The time between the ascension and Christ's final advent creates an "eschatological suspension," a time for decision, faith, and repentance: "That is why we have two Sacraments; one which seals His once-and-for-all work of salvation, and one which continually seals our renewal in that finished work and gives us to participate in its effective operation until He comes again in power and glory."[56] The in-between time is the age of grace – time allowing for *all* to respond to the Gospel.[57]

Just as the Church is not an extension of the Incarnation and does not add anything to Christ, there are not many baptisms but *one* baptism, "wrought out in Christ alone" and "bestowed upon the Church as it is yoked together with Him through the Baptism of the Spirit."[58] As Baker states, quoting Torrance, "baptism and the Christian life are . . . an active participation in the baptism and obedience of Christ, in whose humanity 'all the promises of God are Yes and Amen' – a vicarious Amen which, *as infant baptism especially testifies*,

52 Torrance, *Mediation*, 78.

53 See Stamps, 27 and – for a comprehensive treatment – 111ff and 143ff.

54 Torrance, *C&A, II*, 161.

55 Ibid., 92. See also 156, 164.

56 Ibid., 146. See also 155ff.

57 Ibid., 160.

58 Ibid., 115.

precedes and enfolds our own."[59] But just as Christ's obedience was worked out in the context of his life – in daily conformity of his will to the will of the Father, so it is in the life of the Christian. Torrance relates this to the Eucharist: "At Holy Communion we think of [new life in Christ] not only as a *datum* once and for all, but as a *dandum* which must be given anew, day by day, in the condition of our fallen world."[60]

Torrance's doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ shows that the once-for-all into which we are incorporated in baptism is the act of God towards us that includes our response. Therefore, baptism must be aligned to the two movements inseparably related. Where *we* are concerned, however, the Eucharist does align most directly with the upward movement of response. Christ, of course, is Gift and Giver, Offerer and Offering. In the Eucharist the humanward movement is reflected in the "broken for you" and "shed for you".[61] Nevertheless:

> In so far as we are concerned with the Eucharist in which we *'do this in anamnesis'* of Christ, it is the Godward aspect that is prominent in it, that is, our participation through the Spirit in the self-consecration and self-offering of the whole Christ, body, soul and mind, to the Father in atoning reconciliation for our sakes.[62]

This section has attempted to articulate Torrance's theology of the sacraments in the wider context of his overall theology. With particular reference to the vicarious humanity of Christ, it has sought to articulate the two movements of worship defined at the outset – the humanward movement of God towards humanity, and the Godward movement of humanity towards God. This has supported a Trinitarian understanding of worship, where humanity's role is understood as *participation*, a participation rooted in the Church's sacraments.[63] We turn now to the implications of this for the question of the inclusion of children in the worshipping community.

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59 Baker, 32-3. Emphasis mine.

60 Torrance, *C&A, II*, 164.

61 Ibid., 145.

62 Torrance, *Reconciliation*, 117-8.

63 It should be noted that there is both a sacramental and a *non*-sacramental participation envisioned in the Christian life. As Stamps argues, sacramental union is understood as an expression of a "more comprehensive faith relation, as part of it, *but not a part that can ever be separated from it*," 130. Emphasis mine.

Part II. Implications for Issues Related to the Inclusion of Children in the Sacraments

The Crux: Accountability

There are a number of voiced concerns regarding the inclusion of children in the sacraments, two of which are considered here. First, is it possible for a child to profess faith? Second, is it possible for a child to have an adequate understanding or to know what is going on? Even when allowance is made for maturing in faith, there remains a desire for children to have a faith or understanding that can genuinely be articulated as their own.[64]

The crux is *accountability*. An infant – it is argued – cannot profess her/his own faith because s/he has not reached the age of accountability. Infant baptism is therefore problematic if faith is a pre-requisite. Similarly with participation in the Eucharist: in many traditions children must be prepared before they can receive their First Communion. In the Roman Catholic Church, for example, Canon Law states that a child must first participate in sacramental confession

64 It should be noted that there is not always consistency within traditions or denominations in applying this rationale to both sacraments. There are traditions where infant baptism is practiced but participation in the Eucharist is delayed. And there are those where infant baptism is discouraged or not practiced and yet participation in the Eucharist is allowed. It is not within the scope of this article to discuss in depth the various practices of particular traditions or denominations, except to offer a few brief observations.

First, in some cases where infant baptism is practiced but Eucharist delayed, the aforementioned concern is still present in the sense that participation in the Eucharist can mark the affirmation of one's personal faith. That is to say, those who are baptized as infants can – in preparing for and taking First Communion – give witness to the fact that the faith in which they were baptized is now their own. (This is made explicit in traditions that have Confirmation as the usual step before participation in the Eucharist. Arguably, believer's baptism serves the function of Confirmation in those traditions who do not have the latter.)

Second, many who allow participation in the Eucharist before baptism (at least in theory, if not always in practice) tend to be within low church traditions with a corresponding low view of the sacraments. Such practice is arguably an expression or outworking of ecclesiology: membership within the body is neither a sacramental nor an ontological question. Or, to put it in another way, because the sacraments are not about ontology, they are not intrinsic to membership within the community. Because of this, there are no grounds – ontologically – to bar children from the Eucharist, or 'communion' as it is often referred to in such traditions. Baptism is not a pre-requisite. In other words, *because* neither is ontological in nature, there is no inconsistency in offering communion to those not already baptized. Interestingly, those churches who do not advocate infant baptism will often allow for infant dedication because the latter is about the parents' faith and intention to bring up the child as a Christian, allowing for a subsequent event – believer's baptism – which can be an expression of the child's own faith.

before receiving Holy Communion: "The administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children requires that they have *sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand* the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and *are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion*."[65] And:

> It is primarily the duty of parents and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of pastors, to take care that children *who have reached the use of reason* are prepared properly and, *after they have made sacramental confession*, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible. It is for the pastor to exercise vigilance so that children who have not attained the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed do not approach Holy Communion.[66]

This appears to allow for various levels of maturity. Nevertheless, there remains a belief that there is not sufficient capacity before the "use of reason." Generally, the age of accountability is seven. It can be later, but those under seven are not bound by merely ecclesiastical laws.[67]

In the Church of England, there is now dispensation to offer children communion before Confirmation, with agreed guidelines issued by the House of Bishops. The fourth guideline reads:

> There is a question of regarding the age at which children may be admitted to Holy Communion. In general the time of the first receiving should be determined not so much by the child's chronological age as by *his or her appreciation of the significance of the sacrament.* Subject to the bishop's direction, it is appropriate for the decision to be made by the parish priest after consultation with the parents of those who are responsible for the child's formation, with the parents' goodwill. *An appropriate and serious pattern of preparation should be followed*. The priest and parents share in continuing to educate the child in the significance of Holy Communion so that (s)he gains in understanding with increasing maturity.[68]

There is no set age, though in general practice the age is eight.

Even with the allowance of "according to their capacity" and the idea that understanding is dynamic ("increasing maturity"), the underlying epistemology

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65 Code of Canon Law, c. 913 §1 in *The Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983). Emphasis mine. (Further citations referred to as *CIC*.)

66 *CIC*, 914. Emphasis mine.

67 See *CIC*, 11.

68 For the full text follow the link at https://www.churchofengland.org/media/39890/gs1576.rtf. Emphasis mine.

that sets the criterion is the ability to in some measure reason or understand what is going on.[69] The aspect of *moral* accountability is certainly central in the RC Church, where preparation includes confession. In both, however, the stress is on the faith of the child, which is a pre-requisite for participation.

In traditions that support infant baptism, this begs the question as to why the age of accountability is required for one sacrament but not another, and why the grounds that would allow for infant baptism do not also extend to participation in the Eucharist.[70] It is a positive step when churches move towards greater inclusion of children. In the Anglican Church, for example, the possibility of giving communion to children prior to Confirmation is one such step.[71] Yet the rationale for setting an age restriction or guideline linked to "accountability" does not have adequate *theological* grounding. In the final analysis, the various rationale are expressions of "throwing us back on ourselves."

Torrance traces this emphasis on the subjective aspect of faith to Tertullian. Together with a modernist understanding of knowledge, this fits closely with the experiential model of worship, particularly the reference to infant baptism:

> Tertullian tended to think of salvation as saving discipline in which the healing processes of divine grace and the penitential merit of men cooperate to effect man's cleansing and renewal. Tertullian certainly expounded baptism as concerned with the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and spoke of it in Pauline terms as a new birth, but all this was given a psychological turn. Even when he spoke of the once-for-all objective realities of our faith in Christ, it is the subjective aspect of faith that commanded his main interest. Thus his emphasis came to be laid finally, not on the objective act of God in the Incarnation, but upon the candidate's response, and not upon the divine promise so much as upon the vows of the baptized, i.e., how he interpreted *sacramentum*. The grace of God in baptism completes the preparatory discipline of repentance and seals the *pactum fidei*. Thus the stress is laid by Tertullian on what *man* does and upon the awful responsibility that devolves on him in baptism, the *pondus baptismi*. It was on that ground, of course, that Tertullian once advised postponing the baptism of infants until they were able to *shoulder*

69 Torrance *does* affirm an intellectual element of belief, but argues that this aspect of faith in the biblical context "is grounded upon the basic fact of the faithfulness of God and falls with the determination of man's obedient and faithful response to the covenant-mercies of God," *C&A, II*, 74.

70 See above, note 64.

71 Again, there is no set age for this, but the general rule is not before the age of 10. Again the criterion is "if they are old enough to answer responsibly for themselves" with the minimum age usually set by the diocesan bishop. See: https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/confirmation/frequently-asked-questions.aspx#age.

> *the burden* of it and attain the sound faith necessary for salvation. It was surely this anthropocentric tendency that opened up the way for the rise of Donatism.[72]

Room for Faith?

Torrance's strong emphasis on the objective ground of faith and its primacy over its subjective aspect can, admittedly, lead one to ask: "Is there any room for me?"[73] But, as the previous section has sought to show, it is *not* that faith is unimportant to Torrance. He is not a universalist; there is definitely room for the response to the Response: "We are accustomed to think of faith as something we have or as an act in which we engage, and of believing as our activity. *And that of course would be right*, not least in view of the summons of the Gospel to repent and believe, that we may be saved, or of the words of our Lord when he said to people that their faith had saved them or chided others for their lack of faith."[74]

For Torrance, faith includes knowledge and understanding; relationship with God is about and involves all aspects of our creaturehood, including our mind.[75] Yet it is a particular *understanding* of faith that he argues against: "But we would be misconstruing that if we thought of faith or belief as an autonomous, independent act which we do from a base in ourselves, for the biblical conception of faith is rather different."[76] As Lee states:

> In the doctrines of salvation and justification through faith, Torrance never lays stress upon mere 'faith' in itself, which means the resolution of salvation and justification into our conditional act of 'believing.' He deplores this notion of conditional redemption and grace and its Pelagian and legalistic manifestations prevalent in Evangelical Protestantism, Lutheran Pietism, Calvinist Federal

72 Torrance, *Reconciliation*, 96-7. Last emphasis mine.

73 See Lee, 311-2, and Stamps, 266ff. With specific reference to baptism, see Alexis Torrance who states in his analysis: "We saw that Torrance could concede that baptism properly understood includes both objective and subjective categories, but his priorities lead him to diminish any place for a 'subjective' understanding to such an extent that one wonders if his theology can really accommodate it," 158.

74 Torrance, *Mediation*, 81 (emphasis mine). Torrance argues that our worship is not spaceless or timeless and that, indeed, by the very act of his ascension, Christ makes time for us: "He waits for us and makes time for us, in which we can hear the Gospel, time in which we can repent, time for decision and faith, time in which we can preach the Gospel to all nations," *C&A, II,* 22.

75 See, for example, his chapter "The Mind of Christ in Worship: Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy," in *Reconciliation*, 139-214.

76 Torrance, *Mediation*, 82.

> Theology, and Puritanism. These tend to detach our faith and justification from our union with Christ and his righteousness, due to their excessive emphasis upon our justification through Christ's once-for-all sacrifice on the Cross. Our justification does not lie in mere faith, but indeed in Christ himself. What is supremely important is not our faith, decision and conversion, but the centrality and uniqueness of Jesus Christ and his objective vicarious work.[77]

Faith detached from objective reality finally yields mere subjectivism. By contrast, Torrance offers an understanding of faith that is objectively grounded in the reality that makes demands on us because it enfolds us. He states:

> Faith has to do with the reciprocity, and indeed the community of reciprocity, between God and man, that is, with the polarity between the faithfulness of God and the answering faithfulness of man. Within the covenant relationship of steadfast love and truth, the covenant faithfulness of God *surrounds and upholds the faltering response of his people*.[78]

Torrance quotes Hebert who, in reference to Psalm 36, argues that "the words 'faith' and 'to believe' (*he'emin*) do not properly describe a virtue or quality of man; they describe *man as taking refuge from his own frailty and instability in God who is firm and steadfast."*[79] Torrance articulates this in the context of the New Covenant:

> [Jesus] acts . . . from within the depths of our unfaithfulness and provides us freely with a faithfulness in which we may *share* . . . Admittedly, this is a matter which many people, especially in our Western culture with its stress upon the integrity and freedom of the individual person, find it rather difficult to accept at its face value, for they automatically tend to reinterpret it in line with their axiomatic assumptions – for example, in the stress upon what many people call 'believer's baptism'. Many years ago I recall thinking of the marvelous way in which our human faith is implicated in the faith of Jesus Christ and *grasped by his faithfulness*, when I was teaching my little daughter to walk. I can still feel her tiny fingers gripping my hand as tightly as she could. She did not rely upon her feeble grasp of my hand but upon my strong grasp of her hand *which enfolded her grasp of mine within it*. That is surely how God's faithfulness actualized in Jesus Christ has hold of our weak and faltering faith and holds it securely in his hand.[80]

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77 Lee, 212.

78 Torrance, *Mediation*, 82. See also *Atonement*, 369, where Torrance says that even if the Church becomes unfaithful, God remains faithful and will bring the Church to perfection. Emphasis mine.

79 Torrance, *C&A, II*, 75. See also, 129.

80 Torrance, *Mediation*, 82-3. Emphasis mine.

Baptism is the sacrament that manifests this. It is not, Torrance argues, the sacrament of a covenant that is made when two parties freely and willingly enter into it. On the contrary, it is the sacrament of the fact that in Jesus Christ "God has bound Himself to us and bound us to Himself, before ever we have bound ourselves to Him."[81] This does not become real when we believe. Only when we understand baptism as "the sign and seal not of something that begins with our human decision . . . can we give faith its full place."[82] Here, it is appropriate to quote Torrance at length to capture the force of his argument:

> The Sacrament of Baptism tells us in unmistakable terms that it is not upon our own faith or our own faithfulness that we rely, but upon Christ alone and upon His faithfulness. Baptism is primarily and fundamentally, then, the Sacrament of Christ's obedience on our behalf, and of His faithfulness, and therefore it is the Sacrament which covenants us to a life of faith and obedience to the Father in Him. He who is baptized by that sign and seal relies not upon himself but flees from his own weakness and faithlessness to the everlasting faithfulness of God; but he also attests before men that he renounces reliance upon himself and his own works of obedience or faithfulness to God's Will. That is the faith and faithfulness in which we are baptized*,* the faith and faithfulness *in which we baptize our children*, for the promise is not only to us *but to them also* in the faithfulness of Christ who commands us to present them to Him. It is when we keep the biblical perspective and refuse to let go as the very essence of the Gospel the fact that God has bound Himself to us and bound us to Himself before ever we bind ourselves to Him, *that we have no difficulty about infant-baptism, for infant-baptism is then seen to be the clearest form of the proclamation of the Gospel* and of a Gospel which covenants us to a life of obedience to the Father.[83]

We Know as We are Known

How do they come to know? The idea that children must reach the age of reason before participating in the sacraments assumes that there should or indeed *can* be knowledge or understanding prior to participation. This arguably assumes a non-theological concept of knowledge that is not commensurate with faith. It would be better to start with a theological articulation of knowledge and discuss the question of the inclusion of children *within that context*.

Molnar says Torrance consistently argued that "we must think from a center

81 Torrance, *C&A, II*, 123.

82 Ibid., 129.

83 Ibid., 124-5. Emphasis mine.

in God and not from a center in ourselves – thinking from a center in God meant thinking within faith by acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the divinity of his Holy Spirit as the power enabling theology in the first place."[84] That does not mean there is no knowledge that is defined in terms of the age of reason. Nor is it saying that such knowledge is not a part of what it might mean to understand something of the sacraments. It *is* saying that such knowledge is not the *primary* kind of knowledge in either chronology or significance. Because of that, it should not be the kind of knowledge that determines whether or not a child should be included in the sacraments.

With respect to theological knowledge, Torrance's whole program questions the possibility of knowledge prior to participation. As Molnar summarizes it: "We know God as Creator who transcends the world in and through the world as the medium of his self-communication in the Incarnation and outpouring of his Spirit. We thus know God in his internal relations through the Incarnation. . . . Of course for Torrance this meant that knowledge of God could only take place in faith as we allow our concepts to be shaped by the reality of God himself as he meets us in his Word and Spirit."[85] One cannot know God apart from God.

This epistemology – that we can only know as we are known – has implications for the Christian life. It is why Torrance advocates "evangelical," as opposed to "legal" repentance.[86] Apart from God's saving action we do not even know we are in need of help, let alone able to seek help. God's forgiveness, then, is not conditional on our repentance in the sense that *if* we repent, *then* God will forgive. On the contrary, because God saves us and – by his Holy Spirit – reveals his forgiveness to us, our eyes and ears are opened so that we might see and hear our need and accept it. Only then are we truly free. "All of grace" does not mean "nothing of man"; God's saving act humanizes and personalizes us

84 Molnar, 85. This relates to the "practical answer" to the "practical problem" of evangelism. How, Torrance asks, can we proclaim the Gospel and call for a response in a way that "we do not thereby provoke and indirectly support the self-centred human ego in its claim to an 'inviolable right' over its own decisions, or even reinforce the self-will of that ego in its response to God"? In baptism, people are baptized "out of a centre in their own repenting and believing into a centre in Christ." In the Eucharist Christ has given us "a way of feeding upon him as the life-giving bread so that we may *live continually out of our true centre in him and not out of a centre in ourselves," Mediation*, 96, 97 (emphasis mine). See also Lee, 200, 206.

85 Molnar, 83-4. See also Stamps, 5ff.

86 For a helpful summary on the distinction, see Alan Torrance, "The Theological Vision of James B. Torrance," in *An Introduction to Torrance Theology: Discovering the Incarnate Saviour*, ed. Gerrit Scott Dawson (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 111-14.

so that we can make a truly free response to the Response.[87] There is, then, an *active* knowledge, but only because God frees us. He summons us "to decisions and acts of volition *in that communion,* so that knowledge of Him arises and increases out of obedient conformity to Him."[88]

Legal repentance has to do with a judicial non-imputation of sin. It does nothing in respect of the *prospective* aspect of salvation because it is only about a legal relationship where God is judge. Evangelical repentance, however, is grounded in a *filial* relationship where God is Father. The relationship that is extended to us is not merely legal; it is a sharing in the communion that the Son has with the Father through the Spirit. This is an *ontological* relationship.

This ontological relationship is through union with Christ by the Spirit. It is through union with Christ that we know who we are. Apart from this ontological relationship, we do not have the epistemological resources to understand the significance of that union. Lee states that for Torrance, "the link between coherence-statements and existence-statements is to be bridged by the atonement."[89] Molnar echoes this: "Our knowledge of and relationship with God the Father almighty takes place only in and through the Spirit uniting us *conceptually and existentially* to the Son and thus to the Father."[90] Is it right, then, to expect knowledge of the significance of the Eucharist, apart from participation in it?[91]

Part of the Community: the Corporate Context

For Torrance, union with Christ by the Spirit is a corporate matter before it is an individual one.[92] The Church is *not* a collection of individuals whose faith can be articulated outside the context of community and who gather together to form a bigger group. It is founded on the hypostatic union, and so to speak of the Church is to speak of ontology.[93] The faith of particular people finds its

87 Torrance, *Mediation*, 67ff; 92ff.

88 Torrance quoted in Alexis Torrance, 160. Emphasis mine.

89 Lee, 185.

90 Molnar, 92, Emphasis mine. Molnar here argues that "proper thinking" about the Trinity is "repentant thinking." Given the *context* of such thinking ("through faith and in the Spirit") does this not have implications for the proper context for confession – not as preparation for participation, but *within* communion?

91 Here we are also reminded of Torrance's indebtedness to Michael Polanyi's theory of personal knowledge.

92 Torrance, *Atonement*, 364. Cf. *Mediation*, 67.

93 Torrance, *C&A*, *II*, 91; *Mediation*, 67.

context in the corporate body of Christ: "It is *the community in which* Jesus Christ is personally present, meeting and addressing each individual and asking of them the personal response of faith and love."[94]

Torrance's ecclesiology is firmly grounded in his belief that relationships are ontological. Torrance speaks repeatedly of "onto-relations." Here he is referring to the idea that things do not merely exist in relationship to one another. Rather, the relations between things are intrinsic to the being of things. In other words, a thing cannot exist apart from its relations. Torrance talks about this in relation to personhood.[95] If this is how things/persons actually exist, our epistemology is affected. *How* we know something has to be commensurate with the way the thing actually is. We cannot pull something apart in an effort to understand it; it only makes sense within the context which is intrinsic to its being.

The implication for participation in the sacraments is that personal faith cannot be professed or articulated in any meaningful way outside its ontological, corporate context. Ensuring a child has reached a certain stage of faith, defined in terms of the age of reason, *prior* to membership within the community is back-to-front on two levels. First, it demands a meaningful faith outside of the context in which that faith can exist. Second, it presumes that Church is/can be a collection of individuals whose connection is simply shared belief and practice, both of which have to be adequately articulated outside or apart from the community. But there is a very real sense in which the "vertical" relationship with God – articulated as the "upward movement" from humanity to God – is rooted in and expressed in the "horizontal" relationship within the body of Christ: "The church constitutes the social coefficient of our knowledge of God, for in the nature of the case we are unable to know God in any onto-relational way without knowing him in the togetherness of our personal relations with one another."[96]

Those with concerns about accountability may offer the rejoinder that the community *is* intrinsic to the child professing faith and understanding. They may argue that children, *particularly,* come to an understanding of the Church's traditions and practices and, indeed, come to faith by going to church, learning about Jesus, and being surrounded by other Christians. Nevertheless, as long as their concerns are met in terms of "accountability" defined in relation to the "age of reason," they reveal an underlying epistemology *and* ecclesiology that implies such children cannot be *full* members in this preparatory stage. Their affirmation

94 Torrance, *Atonement*, 365. The corporate and private belong inseparably together and are mutually dependent. See his note 117.

95 Torrance, *Mediation*, 48ff. It is often at this point that Torrance makes reference to developments in particle physics by way of illustration. See, for example, *Mediation*, 47-8.

96 Torrance, quoted in Anderson, 60.

of community still rests on an understanding of Church as a mere collection of individuals. And, in the final analysis, it "throws us back on ourselves" because it puts the onus of membership on the individual. If, however, membership is a gift of the Spirit, and the Church is to be understood ontologically, the community is much more than the place that creates a conducive environment for faith.[97]

This section has considered two concerns raised regarding the inclusion of children in the Church's sacraments: whether or not a child has faith and whether or not s/he has an understanding of what is going on. It has explored the concepts of faith, knowledge, and the corporate community. With reference to Torrance's theology, it has argued that these should be rooted in ontological union with Christ, not with respect to the age of accountability defined in terms of the "use of reason."

Conclusion

This article has attempted to find resources in Torrance's theology to begin to answer questions about extending the sacraments to children. At the outset, it observed the apparent inconsistency of baptizing infants of families who had no intention of being part of the faith community but excluding children who *are* part of the community of faith from receiving communion. The article explored Torrance's theology of the sacraments, with specific attention to the movements of worship, in an effort to begin to answer some of the questions raised by the seeming contradiction.

Torrance's theology supports a wholehearted embrace of the full inclusion of children in the worshipping community, and specifically the sacraments. First, his doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ, which pervades every other doctrine, objectively grounds the sacraments in the act of God *for us*, which includes our response; any "pre-requisite" has already been and is being fulfilled. Second, his understanding of faith and knowledge affirm that it is only by the action of God's Spirit that we know God, and indeed, ourselves. Third, because membership in the community of faith is "onto-relational," it is not something that can be articulated coherently outside of the community.

Torrance is explicit in his affirmation of infant baptism. And his theology of the Eucharist certainly makes room for children to participate *without delay*.

97 See Torrance, *Mediation*, 67, for an articulation of the Church as the Body of Christ, defined with reference to the hypostatic and reconciling union embodied in the person of Christ. See also Lee, 210-11, regarding baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, and the Spirit as "the Agent of our renewal."

First, for him, the two sacraments are *inseparably* related moments which only make sense together. Second, the Eucharist is intrinsically related to the daily working out of the Christian life. With respect to confession, Torrance articulates this in an "evangelical" way, not as a pre-requisite lest we drink judgement upon ourselves.

In light of Torrance's theology of the sacraments, what might we say regarding the inconsistencies in practice outlined above?[98] In each case, at least one of the sacraments is linked – in the final analysis – to a person's *own* faith. Where infant baptism is practiced, but participation in the Eucharist is delayed, Torrance's theology can help encourage churches to consider that the grounds on which they affirm infant baptism can also support inclusion in the Eucharist without delay. For traditions where the sacramental question *is* an *ontological* question, this is not a huge step to make.[99] Where infant baptism is discouraged or not permitted, Torrance's theology can encourage churches to understand membership in a way that is firmly rooted in the sacraments and is, indeed, ontological. It can also encourage reflection on the question as to why children might be included in the Eucharist but not baptism, and whether or not that reveals an inconsistency. In every case, Torrance's theology can encourage discussion about the role of the community of faith and help families (both churched and un-churched) begin to see what "onto-relational" might look like.

This article has shown that there are resources in Torrance's theology to help churches talk about becoming increasingly inclusive in all the right ways. Such conversations might invite the parent, who is open to faith matters for the sake of her children because "it's their right to decide if it's for them," to consider another way to think about faith. Or they might help families within the community of faith to see that their proverbial "training up their children in the way they should go" is not really about ensuring accountability defined in terms of the age of reason, but about the parents' (and children's) "vertical" *ontological* relationship with God being expressed "horizontally." And for families who are keen on having their child christened, but who may not understand why there is nothing significant in the *rite*, in and of itself, such conversations might begin to tease open the significance behind the fact that

98 Some traditions allowing infant baptism but delaying participation in the Eucharist; some allowing participation in the Eucharist but not infant baptism; or some allowing for participation in the Eucharist before baptism – see note 66.

99 If there is, indeed, a belief that infant baptism is an ontological reality, and that preparation for First Communion is understood in that context, I would argue that they should dispense with language that implies otherwise.

they, the godparents and the congregation pledge vows on that special day. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, such conversations could open up *theologically grounded* arguments for why and how our worship should and could be inclusive of *all* children, regardless of ability or aptitude, for example, children with autism or Asperger's Syndrome,[100] so that as a Church, we truly are proclaiming worship as a gift.

100 For an example of such a conversation, see Barbara J. Newman, *Accessible Gospel, Inclusive Worship* (Wyoming: CLC Network, 2015).

A RADICAL NEW HUMANISM:

Thomas Torrance's Mission of the Church

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ABSTRACT: *This essay is an investigation into the formation and shape of Thomas Torrance's doctrine of the mission of the Church. While situating his doctrine within is historical context, the essay demonstrates that Torrance's doctrine is determined by his high Christology and his concept of the Church as the Body of Christ that participates in the risen and ascended Christ's teleological movement towards* pleroma *(fullness). This unique movement is the universalization of the new humanity of Christ. The essay also shows that Torrance's doctrine is grounded in a Trinitarian concept of the* missio Dei *that safeguards the central role of Christ and his Church in mission. It concludes by addressing concerns about the doctrine and by underlining the value of it for the Church today.*

After centuries of neglect, missiology came to the forefront of theological reflection in the twentieth century. David Bosch's magisterial work, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (1991)[1] is arguably one of the most profound and comprehensive studies on the subject. A paradigm shift in this field occurred in the twentieth century. It was one that marked the end of the "age of missions" and the birth of the "age of mission."[2] Missiology and ecclesiology were reconciled, so that mission was no longer viewed as a fringe activity of the Church but as essential to the nature of the Church. Now, in fact, everything about the Church was interpreted as an expression of its

1 David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991).

2 Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1966), 572.

mission. The watershed event of this period was the Willingen meeting of the International Missionary Conference in 1952. Here the concept of *missio Dei* (the mission of God) entered the discourse on mission and began to reshape it.[3] Thereafter the preference was to view the mission of the Church as the outworking of God's grand mission towards all creation. This perspective remains dominant, as reflected in a recent World Council of Churches (WCC) paper on missiology. Mission, it tells us, is the "overflow of the infinite love of the Triune God."[4]

This essay is an investigation of Thomas Torrance's doctrine of the mission of the Church, in the context of the ecumenical movement, where it took shape, and in light of the paradigm shift in missiology that occurred in the twentieth century. The essay demonstrates that Torrance's doctrine is determined by his high Christology and the related concept of the Church as the Body of Christ that participates in the risen and ascended Christ's teleological movement towards *pleroma* (fullness). This movement towards *pleroma* is the universalization of the new humanity of the risen Christ, a humanity that the people of God partake of through the Holy Spirit, Baptism, and the Eucharist. Finally, the essay shows that Torrance's doctrine is rooted in an understanding of the *missio Dei* that safeguards the centrality of Christ and his Church in mission.

The Church as the Leaven in Society

Torrance molded his doctrine of mission in the 1950s (the second decade of his long career) when he was a leading member of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC. His interest in this subject, however, long predates his formal involvement with the WCC. This interest can be partly attributed to his background. Torrance was born in 1913 on the missionary field of China to Scottish missionary parents. He moved to his parents' motherland for his theological education, but with the intention of returning to China to follow in the footsteps of his parents. The Communist revolution in China torpedoed his plan. Torrance would remain instead in Scotland, where he became an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland and eventually a professor at the University of Edinburgh.

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3 Wilhelm Richebacher, "Missio Dei: The Basis of Mission Theology or a Wrong Path?" *International Review of Missions* 92, no. 367 (2003):367; David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 379, 400.

4 The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, "*Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes,"* (05 September 2012)*, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes* (accessed 18 May 2016).

Yet Torrance never lost the missionary's zeal for the spread of the Gospel, a zeal that stemmed, it seems, from his irrepressible hope in the final advent of Christ. At Alyth church—his first pastoral charge—he spoke about the Church's need to "capture again" the "note of the utmost urgency of the Gospel", because the kingdom of God "draweth nigh."[5] Mission, he explained, is not merely a task of the Church. It is the "cause and life" of the Church.[6] The Church "exists only by mission,"[7] so that the missionary task is one that is placed upon the whole people of God. Echoing Emil Brunner's famous words[8] Torrance exclaimed that the "Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning."[9] "But to burn," he added, "the fire must have fuel to burn—that is why it must be always be reaching out and out and out."[10] The Church "needs to be turned inside out; her whole effort and life must face outwards."[11]

Torrance, anticipating Lesslie Newbigin's missiology,[12] thought that the mission of the Church must have as its object the Christianized West as well as the Global South. Britain needed to be re-evangelized, he felt, because it had become deaf to the real meaning of the Gospel. In his view, the Church in Britain had become scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding culture. He faulted it for having "degenerated" to a point where it was a "bulwark of national order and life."[13] When the Church is out of touch with the Kingdom of God, it is powerless to transform the surrounding culture. It was so deeply "identified with the present shape of the nation that she can't change it . . . can't strike at the heart of contemporary civilization, culture and society."[14] The Church had to be reminded that it is not the Kingdom of God but rather an "instrument" of the Kingdom of God.

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5 Torrance, "God's arrows," Unpublished sermon on Philippians 3:8, 12–14, Alyth Barony Parish, Scotland, 1942 (*Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Princeton, NJ).*

6 T.F. Torrance, "The Church in the World," in *Gospel, Church, and Ministry*, ed. Jock Stein (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 83.

7 Torrance, "The Church in the World," 84.

8 Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (London: SCM Press, 1931), 108.

9 Torrance, "The Church in the World," 83.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 84.

12 Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1986).

13 T.F. Torrance, "The Leaven and the Loaf," Unpublished sermon on Matthew 13:33, Alyth Barony Parish, Scotland, 1941 (*Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Princeton, NJ).*

14 Torrance, "The Leaven and the Loaf".

Finding a lesson in the parable of the leaven in Matthew 13, Torrance was convinced that the Church's mission includes being the "greatest disturbing factor on earth."[15] Given that his years at Alyth overlapped with WWII, he did not shy away from using militant language to underline the Church's highest calling:

> Once again, the Church must become militant, aggressive. Away with all comfortable, complacent "Christianity" and stick-in-the-mud Churchmanship! Let the Church remember that she is committed to everlasting war; that her function toward society and State is to throw them into upheaval, to disturb them, and into that fermentation to interject the living word of God whose impact upon society and state will mean a better order and shape for things in the future.[16]

As the last line of this quote indicates, the proclamation of the word of God is the core of the Church's mission. It is what makes the Church a disturbing and reordering force.

The Body of Christ and Mission

The mission of the Church was something Torrance took very seriously from the beginning of his career in Scotland. Yet it was only after he became involved in the ecumenical movement in 1948 that he began to develop his own theology of mission. Torrance was immersed as an official participant in the ecumenical movement for more than a decade, from 1948 to 1962, through his membership in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. His thoughts on the mission of the Church were largely a byproduct of his efforts to advance the unity of the Church at that time. However, the Church's unity and mission were inseparable for him. He recognized that the "great impetus" in the ecumenical movement had been "decidedly missionary."[17] This impetus for Church unity arose when overseas missionaries realized that their witness to the "one Lord, one faith" and "one God" was seriously undermined by Christian disunity. This led to the first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, which is regarded as the official birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement.

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15 Ibid.

16 Torrance, "The Church in the World," 79.

17 T.F. Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam I: The Nature and Mission of the Church," *The Scottish Journal of Theology* 2 (1949), 242.

Torrance dealt with unity and mission in his first paper for the Faith and Order Commission in 1949.[18] It was written in response to the first meeting of the World Council of Churches, held at Amsterdam in 1948, where delegates discovered that the deepest division within the Church was the result of conflicting "catholic" and "evangelical" definitions of the Church. For Torrance both the unity and mission of the Church were dependent on a profound appreciation of the Christological nature of the Church. At Amsterdam, delegates had hoped that a clearer conception of the divine and human dimensions of the Church would promote the cause of Church unity. Torrance had shared that hope, but he now believed that the divine and human dimensions must be understood by means of the "analogy of the hypostatic union" in Christ, not by means of the difference between God and humanity.

The hypostatic union explains the uniqueness of the person of Jesus Christ where, per its Chalcedonian definition, the divine and human natures in Christ are united in one person, without change (*immutabiliter*) or separation (*inseparabiliter*) of the natures, and without confusion (*inconfuse*) or division (*indivise*) of them. The uniqueness of the hypostatic union in Christ must be preserved, but at the same time it warrants, Torrance believed, an "analogical extension into the sphere of the Church."[19] This extension means Christ and the Church can be related in a way that is *similar to* how God and humanity are related in Christ.[20] This suggests that the relation between Church and Christ is neither one of identity nor of difference.[21] The Church and Christ must not be elided, so that the Church becomes another Christ (a Catholic temptation). Nor must the Church become separated from Christ, which can happen when it is viewed as another voluntary human association (a Protestant temptation). Christ loves the Church, rules it, and has bound himself to it.

What justification is there for the analogical application of the hypostatic union to the Church? For Torrance, it resided in the fact that the Church is truly the *Body* of Christ.[22] In his view, this biblical image of the Church is unique. It is not just another metaphor for the Church. Rather, it discloses the Church's ontological nature. Unlike other images, he argued, only this one can be applied to both the Church and Christ, while forcing us to give priority to Christ over the

18 Ibid., 241–70.

19 Ibid., 248.

20 It would be a mistake, though, to interpret the analogical extension to mean that the divine and human are related in the Church in a similar way to how God and man are related in Christ.

21 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam," 248.

22 See his essay "What is the Church?" *The Ecumenical Review* 11, no.1 (1958).

Church. Christ is and always will be the ruler of the Church as surely as he is the head of his Body.

If we take seriously the notion that the Church is the Body of Christ then, from Torrance's perspective, the mission of the Church will be ultimately about the humanization of humankind. Today the word "humanization" suggests the removal of God from human existence, since humanization is close to humanism, which is associated with atheism and secularism. For Torrance, though, humanization would mean more of God, not less of God. This is because for him Jesus Christ is the God-Man and the true measure of what being human is all about.

Indeed, Christ is more than a measure of what it is to be human. He remakes us into his image. It is for this reason Torrance called Christ the "humanizing man",[23] and his Church the "new humanity" in "eschatological concentration."[24] Although humanity was made in the image and likeness of God, sin has disfigured and dehumanized the human being. We cannot fulfill our moral obligations to other people, much less our moral obligations to God. The resurrection of Jesus Christ not only affirmed and healed human nature, it gave it a new glory, since in Christ the human nature is now permanently united with the divine nature. The human being now bears the "image of the man of heaven."[25] The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of a new type of human being and represents, in Torrance's words, a "radically new humanism."[26]

The humanity of the Church and the mission of the Church are, moreover, deeply interrelated. The Church that refuses to engage in world mission, that turns inward, "cuts the roots of the Church" from the new humanity of the risen Christ that seeks universalization through the Church, his Body.[27] The ascension of Christ means this new humanity is hidden from the world, yet the Church as the Body of Christ is an anticipation of this new humanity. The Church though must never be thought of as a *Christus prolongatus*, since its relation to Christ is analogous to the hypostatic union in Christ. The Church thus must never be separated from Christ, its head, or confused with him.

From Torrance's vantage point in the 1950s, the humanity of the risen Christ (and thus our new humanity also) was besieged by two nefarious forces: docetic interpretations of the resurrection and the Communist collectivization of

23 T.F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (1983; repr., Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1992), 69.

24 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam," 267.

25 1 Cor 15:49 (NRSV)

26 T.F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert Walker (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 239.

27 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam," 267.

humanity across the globe. He also feared that the Faith and Order Commission's tendency to think about the Church as the Body of the Trinity or the Body of the Spirit would detract from the importance of the humanity of Christ.[28] In order to safeguard the new humanity, Torrance called for the doctrine of the Church to be reconstructed on the pattern of a "triangular relation" between the Church and the historical Christ, the risen and ascended Christ, and the Church and the advent Christ in his full humanity and deity.[29]

This triangular relation means that the Church in one sense is the Body of the suffering Christ. The veiling of Christ in the ascension forces the Church to look backward to the Jesus of history. In its mission on earth the Church participates in the suffering of Jesus. This happens especially when the Church candidly proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ, because when it does this it provokes the hostility of the world by convicting people of their sinfulness and by summoning them to a decision for Christ. The mission of the Church involves, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches, going "outside the camp" to where Jesus was crucified, to share in the "shame he bore."[30] This mission will continue as long as there is spiritual darkness, alienation, and rebellion in the world.

In another sense, the Church is the Body of the risen and ascended Christ. The Church is alongside Christ in God's place outside created time and space. The Church is "with Jesus before God… gathered up in him and included in his own presence before the Father."[31] Members of the Body on earth can thus experience the power of the resurrection on earth. Yet because the Church is the Body of the ascended Christ, the humanization of humankind cannot be fully realized this side of the final advent of Jesus Christ.

As the Body of the coming Christ, the Church is given its eschatological orientation. This has three implications. One, the Church is called to live in anticipation of Christ's final judgement, which begins at the house of God.[32] As the Church engages continuously in its mission to the world, it engages continuously in its own repentance. This means that it participates in the dying and rising of Christ, until it overcomes all conformity to the fallen world. Two,

28 T.F. Torrance, "Where do we go from Lund?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953), 58.

29 Ibid.

30 William Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Historical and Theological Reconstruction* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951). Manson's commentary on Hebrews was an important resource for Torrance in his study of the priesthood of the Christ (*The Royal Priesthood*).

31 Torrance, *Atonement*, 294.

32 1 Peter 4:17.

the Church's Eucharist should be open to the advent presence (*parousia*) of Christ. This means that the eucharistic liturgy will "anticipate and echo that final Messianic Supper," where everyone who thirsts for the risen life is invited to come and drink.[33] Third, this eschatological orientation guides and shapes the mission of the Church. The mission is temporary. It is for the time of grace and repentance, the time between the ascension and the final advent of Christ. The Church's mission should be animated by the expectation of the *eschaton*. So as the Church reaches out to the world with the gospel, it ought to be reaching out to the Coming One in faith and hope.

Word and Sacrament are instrumental to the fulfillment of the Church's mission and hence to the humanization of humankind. Christ is the head of the Church, his Body, but the Body is "gathered up" into the head through the proclamation of the Word. "Just as a body is gathered up into a head without which the body is nothing, so the Church is by the Word gathered up as His Body in Christ the Head."[34] In this matter, Torrance follows closely his theological master at Basel, who was also lending his voice to ecumenical discussions in the 1950s. In fact, Karl Barth defines the mission of the Church as the proclamation of the Word,[35] which produces the "gathering together" (*congregatio*) of the Church into Christ.

However, Torrance diverges from Barth on the matter of the sacraments and their relation to the nature and mission of the Church. While Barth tends to view the sacraments as basically human responses to Christ,[36] Torrance, tends to view them as signs of the Christ-event, specifically as a union of divine action and the human response to that action through participation in the vicarious humanity of Christ.[37] This explains why Torrance sees the sacraments as essential to completing the mission of the Church. The sacraments mark the outer and inner limits of the Church. Baptism "marks the outer frontier of the Church"; it is where the Church announces the Gospel to the world and where people are incorporated into the Body of Christ. The Lord's Supper "marks the inner

33 T.F. Torrance, "Liturgy and Apocalypse" *Church Service Society Annual* 24 (1954), 1–18.

34 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam," 256. Torrance understands the "Word" as Christ himself, or more specifically in this case, as the "Mind of Christ," which he puts in parenthesis.

35 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.2, trans. G.T. Thomson and Harold Knight, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 743–96.

36 George Hunsinger, "Karl Barth on the Lord's Supper: An Ecumenical Appraisal," *Zeitschrift fur Dialektische Theologie*, Supplement Series 5 (2003), 152.

37 T.F. Torrance, "Eschatology and the Eucharist," in *Intercommunion,* ed. D.M. Baillie and J. Marsh (London: SCM, 1952), 311.

frontier" of the Church, since it is here that Christ is sacramentally present and where believers spiritually feed on the flesh and blood of Christ. In short, Baptism brings people into Christ, while the Lord's Supper continually nourishes them with Christ, so that they become "bone of His bone and flesh of his flesh."[38]

Word and Sacrament also "reveal and shape the form" of the Church's mission in the world.[39] It is essentially a mission of reconciliation. The Church is a holy community where people have been reconciled to God, and each other, through Christ. Yet it is the duty of this community to share the news of this reconciliation, for this reconciliation applies to the whole world (2 Cor 5:19). Moreover, the Church is called to participate in Christ's reconciliation of the world through sacrificial service in the world. In sum, "the Church must proclaim the reconciliation by which it lives and live out the reconciliation it proclaims."[40] This explains why Torrance was a passionate and indefatigable advocate of Church unity. Healing the divisions within the Church was the most important demonstration of reconciliation within the world.

Incarnation, Atonement, and Mission

While the "triangular relation" between the Christ and the Church may help to safeguard the new humanity, it could not on its own, Torrance felt, explain the complex relationship between Christ and the Church, or clearly determine the Church's mission in the world. We showed above how Torrance made use of the analogy of the hypostatic union to explain the relationship between Christ and his Church. In order, though, to account for the complex relationship of the two, Torrance called for a more "dynamic" understanding of the classical concept. This would capture the "mutual involution" of Christ's incarnation and atonement, or, in other words, the intertwining of his life and death. This dynamic concept also does justice to the entire mission of Jesus Christ, for it entails thinking about it in terms of Christ's ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and final advent. When a dynamic concept of the hypostatic union is applied by analogical extension to the Church, it will help to ensure that the mission of the Church corresponds more closely to Christ's mission to the world. The Church then will be understood as wholly constituted and wholly directed on the basis of Christ's

38 Torrance, "Eschatology and the Eucharist," 337.

39 T.F. Torrance, "The Mission of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19, no. 2 (1966), 142.

40 Ibid., 141.

"incorporating and atoning action." [41]

Jesus' life and mission is about the "One" incorporating himself into the "Many." Jesus formed a new Israel out of the twelve disciples of old Israel. He also formed a new human nature when he incorporated into himself not only the sinful nature of Israel but the sinful nature of all humanity. Jesus' birth and Baptism were corporate events that point backward and forward. Through them Jesus recapitulates in himself the "chosen people," and embodies in himself "the new humanity of the future."[42] Jesus' death on the cross was a substitutionary and representative death. It was the death of the "One for the Many." The corrupt human nature that Christ made concorporate with himself is put to death. Thus, the Many are remade in the One. The upshot is that the "One and the Many is the doctrine of Christ," while the "Many and the One is the doctrine of the Church, the Body of Christ."[43] In the former, Christ represents humanity; in the latter, the Church represents Christ to the world.

Torrance's Christological understanding of the Church and its mission did not end with his employment of the hypostatic union. In order to give the Church a deeper grounding in Christ, he also harnessed for his analogical purpose the classic *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* formula. To think of the Church's relation to Christ *anhypostatically* then is to think of the Church as having "no *per se* existence, no independent hypostasis, apart from Christ's atonement."[44] To think of the Church's relation to Christ *enhypostatically* is to think about the Church as having "a real *hypostasis"* only through incorporation in Christ and as a consequence of "a concrete function in union with Him."[45]

These analogical extensions of Christology to the Church have profound implications for the mission of the Church. The Church is the Body of the risen and ascended Christ, but in light of the dynamic concept of the hypostatic union, the Church must now be regarded as participating in Christ's teleological movement towards fullness. Within the Church this movement is intensive, for the Body of believers grows into "a perfect man, to the measure and stature and fullness of Christ."[46] Through the Church's mission, this teleological movement occurs

41 T.F. Torrance, "The Atonement and the Doctrine of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1954), 246.

42 T.F. Torrance, "The Foundation of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953), 122.

43 Thomas Torrance, "The Atonement and the Doctrine of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7 (1954), 249.

44 Torrance, "The Atonement," 254.

45 Ibid., 255.

46 Ephesians 4:13 (NKJV).

extensively in the world, "reaching out to all men in all ages in a movement as expansive as the ascension of Christ to fill all things."[47] The movement towards fullness is the universalization of the new humanity of the risen Christ. Universalization does not mean universalism, the certain redemption of every human being, but it does mean that redemption is extended to all through Christ and his Church.

At Pentecost, the mission of the Church began when it was sent into the world as the Many representing the One. The Church, though, can have neither an independent nature nor an independent mission, because its life and mission hinge on its incorporation in Christ and its participation in his way of humiliation and obedience.

> The only way the Church can follow Him is by way of *anhypostasia*, by way of self-denial and crucifixion, by letting Christ take its place and displace self-assertion; and by way of *enhypostasia,* by way of incorporation and resurrection.[48]

Apart from incorporation and participation in Christ, the Church is a fallen human institution and its mission is a disordered human mission. This is because, in Torrance's final analysis, "Christ is the Church."[49] That is because the Church begins with him, in the hypostatic union of God and man. The inverse though is not true: the Church is not Christ. The Church, to be sure, is the Body of Christ through Christ's election, by its grafting into Christ, by its participation in him. Yet in another sense, because it is both an eschatological and teleological reality, the Church must also *become* the Body of Christ by growing up into Christ, by sharing in Christ's work of reconciliation, and by overcoming its scandalous disunity and division. Only as the Church becomes the Church of Christ can it truly represent Christ to the world.

The Church, Torrance insists, can have no divine mission apart from Christ. Yet given that Christ has ascended from the world, one might be tempted to doubt the extent of the Church's participation in Christ's mission of reconciliation. There is no need to doubt, for two reasons. The first is the apostolic foundation of the Church:

> Jesus Christ laid the foundation of the Church and its mission in the apostles to whom He gave authoritative commission and whom he appointed as the wise master-builder to order and direct its mission. The Church continues

47 Torrance, "Mission of the Church," 132.

48 Torrance, "The Atonement," 252.

49 Torrance, "What is the Church?" 9.

> throughout all ages to be apostolic in that it remains faithful to its foundation in the apostles and fulfills its mission within the sphere of the commission they received from the Lord for the Church.[50]

The second is the work of the Holy Spirit, which we shall turn to next.

The Spirit and Mission

It is obvious that Torrance's doctrine of the mission of the Church is heavily determined by his Christology. The Church's mission is basically a matter of participating in Christ's mission to reconcile all things to himself and to reproduce the new humanity of Christ within creation. Torrance earned a reputation as a great Trinitarian theologian, so we should expect a role for the Holy Spirit in his doctrine of the mission of the Church. He does not disappoint us, although a historical event seems to have given impetus to the matter in this case. He was a member of the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church (TCCC), which operated from 1955-1963, which had as its mandate the study of the "doctrine of the Church in close relation to both the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."[51] Since his theology was unabashedly Christocentric, Torrance was clearly comfortable with exploring doctrine of the Church in relation to Christology. He was, however, less comfortable at first with the relationship between the Church and pneumatology. He was concerned that discussions about the Spirit and the Church could lead to attempts to "de-christologize ecclesiology," and he also sensed an insidious tendency to confuse the Holy Spirit with created spirits, since the Holy Spirit lacks the obvious and familiar objectivity of the Son. He believed that Protestants were prone to confuse the human spirit ("a *homineque*") with the Spirit of God; while Catholics were prone to confuse the spirit of the Church with the Spirit of God ("an *ecclesiaque"*).[52]

Torrance had good reason to be worried. Starting in the latter half of the twentieth century, theologians who had been inspired by the *missio Dei* motif began to give more attention to the role of the Spirit in mission. In some cases, unfortunately, this had the knock-on effect of undermining the necessity of the Church's mission, since it was presumed that the Spirit of God is already carrying

50 Torrance, "The Mission of the Church," 142.

51 Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches: Minutes, Commission and Working Committee, no. 17 (1959):19.

52 Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM, 1965), 228.

out God's redemptive work independently of the mission of the Church.[53] Torrance in contrast was careful to keep together the activities of Christ, the Spirit, and the Church. This means the mission of the Spirit is correlative to the work of Jesus Christ. As Christ is the mediator between people and God, so the Spirit mediates between Christ and his Church. Torrance gave the Spirit Christological content, because he took very seriously the idea that the Church is the Body *of* Christ, not the Body of the Spirit. In other words, he believed the divine nature of the Church originated with the Word incarnate, not the Holy Spirit.[54]

The Spirit is nonetheless indispensable to the mission of the Church. To begin with, the Spirit is instrumental in establishing the Church's apostolic mission. "Thus through the Spirit the apostolate is constituted the foundation of the Christian Church, the Body of Christ in history through which Christ makes His own image appear, His own voice to sound, His own saving work to be effectively operative on men."[55] The Holy Spirit is "the One supremely sent by Christ, the Apostle–Spirit who represents Christ," but who is at the same time one with God the Son and God the Father.[56] Torrance would also have us believe that the Spirit, along with the Word and Sacrament, has an essential role in the gathering together and the gathering up of the Church into Christ.[57] It might appear that the Spirit plays a secondary role here to that of the Word and the Sacrament, since these are more clearly associated with the Church's incorporation into Christ. The power of the Word derives from the Word that was made flesh, and the physicality of Baptism and the Lord's Supper testify to their intimate connection to that Word made flesh.

Yet the Word that is proclaimed by the Church is referred to as the "Sword of the Spirit" that comes out of the mouth of Christ, which convicts the world of sin and of God's righteousness and judgement. It is through the Spirit of Pentecost that the Church's relation to Christ becomes "actualized as a concrete reality within the conditions of human history."[58] The Spirit forges the "organic union" that exists between the Church and Jesus Christ. Christ's comprehensive atonement means the Church's mission, to reiterate, can only be a participation in Christ's mission to the world. The Church's mission is not identical to Christ's

53 See Johannes Aagaard, "Trends in Missiological Thinking During the Sixties," *International Review of Missions* 62 (1973): 8–25.

54 Torrance, "Where Do We Go," 58.

55 Torrance, "The Mission of the Church," 132.

56 Ibid., 131.

57 Ibid.

58 Torrance, "The Mission of the Church," 134.

mission, however. Rather, it exists in "contrapuntal relation" to Christ's heavenly mission, and it is the Holy Spirit that establishes this unique relation.[59]

The outward mission of the Church, as we learned, is the expansion of the new humanity that happens through the Church's sharing in the ascended Christ's teleological movement to towards fullness. Following his work for the TCCC, Torrance began to accent the Holy Spirit's role in the Church's share in this movement. The Church's activity is made possible through the "one universal Spirit of God."[60] The Holy Spirit is the key to the universalization of this new humanity. "What has been fulfilled intensively in the Church through the operation of the Spirit must be fulfilled extensively in all mankind and all creation."[61]

We must bear in mind that the new human nature is not simply our old nature cloaked with immortal flesh. This new human nature is essentially relational, because it begins with Christ, who is the "One and the Many"; while the Church, his Body, is the "Many and the One." Thus each member of the Body of Christ has a personal, vertical relation to Christ, as evident in Baptism; and all members of the Body have a public, horizontal relationship to Christ as well, as signified by Holy Communion. The Holy Spirit actualizes both forms of relationships, and that is what makes the Church a "communion of the Holy Spirit." We should not imagine, though, that there are two holy unions—one with Christ and another with the Holy Spirit. Torrance is adamant that the union that the Spirit establishes is "correlative" to the corporate union people have with Jesus Christ. So, it is better to say that the Church is a "corporate union" with Christ "through the communion of the Spirit."[62]

Yet the Spirit's role in mission is not merely functional. The Spirit shares in the final goal of mission, since corporate union with Christ through the communion of the Spirit ultimately leads to a participation in the eternal communion of love—the life of the Triune God. Decades after he wrote about the mission of the Church, Torrance described the perfect love that characterizes the Triune God as an overflowing love that "freely and lovingly moves outward toward others, whom God creates for fellowship with himself so that they may share with him the very Communion of Love which is his own divine Life and Being."[63] The

59 Torrance, *Atonement*, 281.

60 Torrance, "The Mission of the Church," 138.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., 133.

63 T.F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons* (London, New York: T&T Clark 1996), 6.

Church's expansion towards *pleroma* or fullness then is ultimately about growth into the fullness of the love of God "in all its height and depth and length and breadth" as it gathers up all nations into the Body of Christ through the Spirit.[64]

Missio Dei

As was noted at the outset, the biggest change in missiology occurred in the middle of the last century when instead of the mission of the Church people began to focus on the *missio Dei.* This change helped to divert attention away from the stigma of colonialism that was attached to the Church's mission. *Missio Dei* implied, in the words of missiologist David Bosch, that mission was "not primarily an activity of the Church, but an attribute of God."[65] "God is a missionary God" suddenly became a refrain in the 1950s. While this refrain may have died out, the theological notion lived on to leave its mark on the Church, as indicated by the statement issued by the WCC at the beginning of this paper.[66] It would be beneficial then to try to understand Torrance's doctrine in light of that momentous change in mission theology.

At first one might be surprised by the absence of the term *missio Dei* in Torrance's doctrine*,* especially given that the term made its splash onto the theological scene just as Torrance began writing about the Church and its mission, and also given that the new use of the term owes something to Karl Barth's influence.[67] Yet although Torrance does not use the term *missio Dei,* his doctrine is certainly shaped by a concept of the *missio Dei*. As we have seen, Torrance believed that God's love is freely directed toward the world for the purpose of drawing people into fellowship with himself. Torrance moreover discerned a continuity between this mission of God and the mission of the Church. Sometimes he described this continuity in binitarian terms: "As the Father loves the Son, so the Son loves the Church; as the Son was sent by the Father, so the Church is sent by the Son."[68] Yet he also described it in Trinitarian terms, so Christ's commission to his apostles is to be attributed to God's "twofold sending"

64 Torrance, "What is the Church?" 17.

65 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

66 The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, "*Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes," (05 September 2012), https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes* (accessed 18 May 2016).

67 Karl Barth is known to have given a lecture on mission theology in 1932.

68 Torrance, *Atonement*, 373.

of the Son and the Spirit. Christ is described as "the Apostle from the Father sent into the world on the mission of love"; while the Holy Spirit is identified as the "Apostle-Spirit" who is the "One supremely sent" by Christ.[69]

The Church then, for Torrance, is the fruit of God's mission. It is a "divine creation"; it does not derive "from below" but "from above." Indeed, Torrance saw the Church as "grounded in the Being and Life of God." Yet the Church is not a mystical reality. There is no Church to be found outside of history or creation, or outside of space-time. The Church is formed out of people in the world, and people are brought into the Church through the Word and Sacrament.

Torrance might have been simply unaware of what was happening in the wider discussion of mission in the 1950s. In hindsight, missiologists could have benefited from a greater awareness of what Torrance was saying about the Church's mission, for the term *missio Dei* has proven to be a mixed blessing for the Church. It may have helped to rescue mission from its association with European colonialism and the "white man's burden," but it has also been used to sanction very divergent theologies of mission. The problem with the term was neatly summed up by German missiologist William Richebacher, when he stated that "everyone reads into and out of the 'container definition' whatever he or she needs as the time."[70] *Missio Dei* would in time be interpreted basically in one of two ways: one "Cosmocentric", the other "Christocentric." The Cosmocentric way highlights God's mission to the world outside the Church. As Thomas Wieser puts it, "the Church serves the *missio Dei* in the world . . . (when) it points to God at work in world history and names him there."[71] The Christocentric way, on the other hand, highlights God's mission through Jesus Christ and the Church, since they are seen as God's only chosen means for fulfilling his mission to the whole world. It goes without saying that Torrance's doctrine of mission represents a Christocentric understanding of *missio Dei*, although it would be more accurate to describe his doctrine as an expression of a Trinitarian *missio Dei.*

Conclusion

Torrance's doctrine of the mission of the Church is a small part of his theology, and the theologian's ruminations on mission are confined largely to the earliest

69 Torrance, "The Mission of the Church," 130–31.

70 William Richebacher, "*Missio Dei:* The Basis of Mission Theology or a Wrong Path?" *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (2003): 589.

71 Thomas Wieser, ed., *Planning for Mission: Working Papers on the Quest for Missionary Communities* (New York: U.S. Conference for the World Council of Churches, 1966), 52.

stages of his career—although the basic theology behind this doctrine can be traced through to the end of Torrance's career. For those reasons, his doctrine of mission will usually escape the notice of admirers of his theology, not to mention missiologists. This is unfortunate, because Torrance's doctrine could help to promote the renewal and revival of mission, especially in the older churches of the West, where the word 'mission' is scarcely even uttered anymore. Where the missionary impulse still exists in those churches it is often indistinguishable from the humanitarian impulse outside them, an impulse that is rooted in secular humanism. What the world must hear about, and receive, is the reality of the radical new humanism that is found only in Jesus Christ and his Church.

One at first might fault Torrance's doctrine of mission for having no practical value for the Church, because it suggests that God is the only real subject of mission. Torrance would make no apology for this characteristic, because to say God is the subject of mission is to uphold the Christian doctrine of salvation through grace alone. People nonetheless have a vital role to play in God's mission. However, they can only fulfill that role by denying themselves, by becoming part of the Body of Christ and participating in the God-Man's mission to the world through the proclamation of the Gospel, the enactment of reconciliation, and sacrificial works of love.

THOMAS F. TORRANCE'S EARLY ECUMENICAL VIEWS ON ECCLESIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study is to explore the fundamental theological principles which Thomas F. Torrance considered to be necessary for ecumenical agreement in ecclesiological questions. In undertaking this endeavor, two limitations are set. On the one hand, the inquiry is limited to the early ecumenical engagement of Torrance, that is, his work in the late 1940s and 1950s. On the other hand, due to the variety of topics within ecclesiology which are covered in his studies from this period, this study is restricted to two of his articles in which great emphasis is given to the relation of Christ with his Church, the nature and mission of the Church, and the Christological correction of ecclesiology. These studies are* Concerning Amsterdam I. The Nature and Mission of the Church *and* The Atonement and the Oneness of the Church*. After a systematic overview of these two studies, a personal reflection is given in which the leading ideas of Torrance's ecumenical engagement in the field of ecclesiology are highlighted, and his three primary ecclesiological principles are outlined.*

Introduction

Alister E. McGrath, in his work on Thomas F. Torrance's theological development and significance, writes the following about his ecumenical engagement:

> It is arguable that Torrance's main contribution to ecumenical dialogue lay not so much in his personal participation in the bilateral conversations of the time [1940s and 1950s], but in his rigorous exploration of the fundamental theological principles which he considered to be the necessary basis of such dialogue.[1]

1 A. E. McGrath, *Thomas F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 95.

These fundamental theological principles are what this study aims to explore. In pursuing this purpose, the following limits have been taken into account. First, the inquiry has been limited to the early ecumenical engagement of Torrance, that is, especially in the late 1940s and 1950s.[2] Second, even his studies written within this period cover a variety of topics within ecclesiology.[3] Consequently, this study is restricted to two articles by Torrance, which are also referred to by McGrath, in which great emphasis is given to the relation of Christ with his Church, the nature and mission of the Church, and the Christological correction of ecclesiology. These are the boundaries within which we pursue our study of Torrance's leading ecumenical principles.

In order to do so, a systematic overview of the two relevant studies, "Concerning Amsterdam I. The Nature and Mission of the Church"[4] and "The Atonement and the Oneness of the Church,"[5] is first given, which is followed by a summary of the leading ideas of Torrance's ecumenical engagement.

Concerning Amsterdam I

The purpose of this first overview is to face the ecclesiological questions which had been raised in the first two volumes prepared for the meeting of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam and to point the discussion further along the road to theological unity.[6]

2 Torrance's later ecumenical engagement, especially in the Orthodox-Reformed dialogue from 1979, is marked by a different approach. In that case, Torrance proposed to begin with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and then from that basis to move on to the doctrines of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, and the ministry. See T. F. Torrance, *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), xi. As we will see, his early ecumenical engagement is characterized by a Christocentric approach. This difference, however, does not result in inconsistency in his theology, because for him Trinitarian and Christological approaches are inseparable. See in the field of ecclesiology, e.g., T. F. Torrance, "Where Do We Go from Lund?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953): 58.

3 As McGrath points out in his book *Thomas F. Torrance*, 96. Torrance's writing on ecumenical issues in the 1950s were gathered together in T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Vol. 1, Order and Disorder* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959) and *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Vol. 2, The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960).

4 T. F. Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam I. The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Discussion of Vols. I and II of the Preparatory Studies," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 2 (1949): 241-70.

5 T. F. Torrance, "The Atonement and the Oneness of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7 (1954): 245-269.

6 Torrance, *Concerning Amsterdam I.*, 241.

From the outset, Torrance sets out two principles. Firstly, the unity of the churches is an *eschatological reality* which is present even in the midst of disunity and yet is still to come at the end of history. It is a reality that "interpenetrates history and transcends it."[7] Accordingly, its effect is twofold: it brings the churches together to seek unity and yet prevents them "from snatching too hastily at a visible unity."[8]

This brings us to the second principle of his argument. Torrance offers a middle way between confessionalism and relativism which he describes as *Eucharistic thinking*: "not that primarily in which we offer of our own traditions and efforts toward a common pool, but an ever-new and thankful receiving together of the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 14.5 and Eph. 4.12-16) 'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that speaking the truth in love we may grow up unto Him in all things who is the head, even Christ.'"[9]

In order to understand the notion of Eucharistic thinking, we should note that Torrance utilizes the notion in two ways. Figuratively, it means the Eucharistic attitude, that is, the humility of receiving, instead of offering or giving,[10] which is considered to be the correct attitude in ecumenical relations. Literally, Eucharistic thinking denotes the idea that the Eucharist mediates eschatological unity to us. Through the Eucharist we receive judgment upon and, at the same time, healing for our divisions.[11] These two principles, the unity of the Church as eschatological reality and the need for Eucharistic thinking, have several implications which Torrance unfolds as follows.

First, if the unity of the Church is eschatological, then ecclesiastical validity cannot be equated with any form of earthly validity. The validity of the ministry, order, councils, or theological formulations of the Church cannot and do not repose on any historical basis, but only on a certain divine act, i.e. the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the continuity of the Church is not based on the actual succession of bishops, but on Baptism whereby we are

7 Ibid., 242.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 243.

10 Interestingly in his other study, "The Paschal Mystery of Christ and the Eucharist," in *Theology in Reconciliation: Essays toward Evangelical and Catholic Unity in East and West* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 118, the act of offering is emphasized, although it is interpreted as participation in the self-offering of Christ.

11 Ibid., 243-244.

initiated into the unrepeatable events of Christ's life.[12]

Second, "if the given unity of the Church is essentially eschatological then there is ultimately no self-consistent whole in any historical traditions."[13] One's own tradition can be corrected and completed only by other traditions. We can find an interesting example of this in Torrance's two essays: "The Relevance of Orthodoxy" and "The Orthodox Church in Great Britain."[14]

In the first essay, Torrance interprets Acts 2:41-47 "through Orthodox eyes" to understand it in its original context.[15] Torrance highlights Orthodox principles which he deems to be normative also for the Reformed. The Church must let the truths of the Gospel impose themselves upon the Church's life in such a way that it must be aware that its doctrinal formulations only point to the divine truths but do not contain them.[16] It is the same concerning the Holy Spirit whom the Church does not possess, but rather is possessed by Him, and accordingly church structure must express this openness to the Majesty of God: instead of hierarchy, authority in fellowship is the right pattern.[17] Where Torrance is most critical of the Reformed in favor of the Orthodox is the topic of worship. He states that Reformed worship is far removed from the worship of the early Christians, whereas the Orthodox liturgy is the most biblically grounded. For him the main point of Orthodox liturgy is that it is considered to be lifted up by the Spirit into the ongoing heavenly worship, whereas Protestant worship is a way of expressing oneself before God.[18]

In the second essay, Torrance points out areas in which Orthodox contributions would be welcome in the British context in which, according to Torrance, many church leaders lack a solid theological grounding. In this situation the coherency of doctrine and church life, which is a characteristic of the Orthodox Church, is

12 Ibid., 244-245.

13 Ibid., 245.

14 T. F. Torrance, "The Relevance of Orthodoxy," *Participatio: Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship* 4 (2013): 324-332; T. F. Torrance, "The Orthodox Church in Great Britain," *Participatio: Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship* 4 (2013): 333-339. Both essays can be found also in: M. Baker and T. Speidell, *T. F. Torrance and Eastern Orthodoxy: Theology in Reconciliation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015). In this study, footnote references to these essays match the page numbers as they appear in *Participatio*.

15 Torrance, "Relevance of Orthodoxy," 325.

16 Ibid., 325-327.

17 Ibid., 327-329. See also Torrance, "Orthodox Church in Great Britain," 337.

18 Torrance, "Relevance of Orthodoxy," 330-331.

needed.[19] In relation to this, Torrance also highlights the ability of the Orthodox Church to defend the Christian faith in a changing culture by learning to distinguish the central truth of the Gospel.[20] Interestingly, Torrance also suggests that the Orthodox Church might offer a simplified liturgy to the Reformed Church, in which a strong theological liturgy would be appreciated.[21] Finally, he proposes the rethinking of the doctrine of the Virgin Mary which could heal the deepest schism in the one people of God, i.e. between Israel and Christianity.[22]

Torrance's appreciation for the Orthodox Church arises from the conviction that its tradition is rooted more in the ancient form of Christianity than that of any other denomination.[23] For this reason it can help the Reformed Church to be more faithful to biblical principles. I think that Torrance's suggestion involves a great opportunity for renewal in the Reformed Church. Caution is needed, however, because Torrance's argument has its weakness as well as its strength. In fact, its weakness and strength both stem from the same root. While the Orthodox Church can help to provide a clearer picture of biblical truths, it can also hinder the embodiment of the Gospel in today's culture. A simple example: if we in postmodern society tried to renew the Reformed church service by using a simplified Orthodox liturgy, it would be more unfamiliar to many people - especially to the youth – than the well known Reformed liturgy. The simplified Orthodox liturgy may better reflect biblical truths, but its foreignness in today's western culture would likely obscure those truths for those in attendance. This does not mean, however, that Torrance's suggestion is wholly inappropriate to the contemporary context. His approach might be of immense help in finding new ways of worship that are faithful to the core of the Gospel. Thus, the *epiclesis* and the idea of joining the worship of God in heaven can provide the impetus for taking a fresh look at worship. It is important, however, to find a way of doing so that is accessible to people living in a postmodern age. In short, faithfulness to the Gospel demands that a way be prepared for the proclamation of the Gospel in each particular culture.

After this brief digression, we now turn to the third implication of Church unity as an eschatological reality. The given (doctrinal) unity places responsibility on the churches "to think out every doctrine into every other doctrine."[24] The

19 Torrance, "Orthodox Church in Great Britain," 335.

20 Ibid., 336.

21 Ibid., 337-338.

22 Ibid., 338.

23 Torrance, "Relevance of Orthodoxy," 325.

24 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam I," 246.

result of this should be the correction of doctrines, overcoming differences, and then getting closer to the "most ultimate truths." Torrance highlights three doctrines: *ecclesiology* should be corrected by *Christology* and both of them by *eschatology*, because these suffered from arrested development in the course of church history.[25] In the rest of his study, Torrance deals with the agreements and disagreements concerning the nature and mission of the Church.

The nature of the Church: Concerning the relation of the Church to Christ, a question on which there is no agreement, Torrance highlights the following issues. First, he applies the pattern of the hypostatic union to the relation in such a way that he identifies the whole Christ as the "divine element" of the Church: "as God and Man are related in Christ so Christ and the Church are related."[26] Second, he emphasizes that the Church as the *Body* of Christ must not be conformed to the fashion of the world (in terms of a hierarchical structure) but should image its Lord in humble service. It is in this way that the Church becomes, as it were, sacramentally correlative to the life and passion of Christ. "It is thus that she [the Church] fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, and thus that she shews forth His death till He comes."[27] Consequently, the worldly structure of the Church is not the element whereby the Church images its Lord, and therefore neither does it belong to the everlasting *esse* (essence) of the Church. Third , concerning the continuity of the Church, Torrance stays within the pattern of the hypostatic union with its emphasis on Christ's sovereignty. The *visible* continuity of the Church cannot be underestimated, because as in the incarnation so in the Church: Christ is involved in physical events in space and time. Thus "the Church extends the corporeality of the Word and mediates it to a corporeal world through such physical events as the Bible, Preaching, the Sacraments, etc."[28] The same is true for the ministry, which is grounded in historical continuity with the apostolic foundation. However, all these are only means which, by their sacramental character, are used by Christ to communicate himself through them to the world. Church order must be conformed to this divinely appointed service to make room for this creative breaking of God's Word into the world. This is what it means to say that Christ is the head of the Church. A hierarchical church order should not prevent Christ's government over his Body.[29]

25 Ibid., 247.

26 Ibid., 248. Torrance thinks that the hypostatic union is grounded upon the "immanent relation within the transcendent Trinity." See in Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement*, Vol 1, 44.

27 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam I.," 250.

28 Ibid., 252.

29 Ibid., 253-254.

The mission of the Church: The sacramental character of the Church brings it so close to its Lord that Torrance speaks, in a certain sense, of the identity of their actions: "her [the Church's] Word in the Gospel of reconciliation and forgiveness is in fact the Word and Power of Christ."[30] This sacramental character of the Church serves as a framework for the topic of apostolic succession which Torrance unfolds as follows. It is Christ who is the apostle sent by the Father. Christ gives us (the whole Body) to share in his ministry. However, within this ministry the role of the apostles is unique, because they formed the "human end" of the divine revelation. In this primary sense the apostolate is unrepeatable. It has its only "earthly counterpart" in the biblical witness of the Old and the New Testaments. The ministry of the Church inheres in its foundation, the unrepeatable apostolate, and the apostolate is mediated through the ministry. There is a chronological sequence between apostolate and ministry, but this inherence and mediation are more determinative in their relation to one another.[31] Furthermore, it is not the ministry of the priestly order of the Church on which the whole question of the apostolic succession turns, but the ministry of the whole Body which stands in the "apostolic succession" through its conformity to the apostles' witness and which has been empowered by Christ "to be a fellow-worker with him in the evangelization of the world." This is a "holy synergism," as Torrance names it.[32]

Torrance claims that the nature of the Church is fundamentally eschatological. Through it the new humanity, or rather the new creation, breaks into the world. The task of the Church is to let itself be the channel through which this divine act takes place. The mission of the Church is prevented by its "collaboration with" the world, by being clothed in the world's passing form and fashion, a disorder which obscures its real nature. In this prevention of mission even our traditions are to blame. They are "ever-deepening grooves" in which the power of God has been "systematically canalised."[33] The eschatological nature of the Church derives from its relation with its Lord in whom everything is already re-created and who gives a share in the new creation to his body.[34]

Having reviewed the first article, let us now turn to the second one. The evaluative comments are reserved until the last part of the essay where we will trace the main motifs which are connected and deepened in both studies.

30 Ibid., 260.

31 Ibid., 260-63.

32 Ibid., 265.

33 Ibid., 270.

34 Ibid., 268-70.

The Atonement and Oneness of the Church

Torrance states in this study that the biblical statement that the Church is the Body of Christ is not a mere figure but a reality, and accordingly the doctrine of the Church should be formulated in terms of the Christological analogy. He puts great emphasis on the results of modern biblical studies which bear on the Christological basis for our understanding of the doctrine of the Church. He deals especially with the bearing of atonement on the doctrine of Christ and, through it, on the doctrine of the Church.[35]

Although Torrance is critical of the way in which the doctrine of the hypostatic union has tended to be interpreted in static terms, he does not think that the classical formulation needs to be changed so much as it needs to be filled out "in accordance with its own fundamental position, in a more *dynamic* way."[36] It means to look upon the Chalcedonian formula in its context of Christ's mission for our salvation, as *the hypostatic union at work* in expiation and atonement. What does this dynamic reinterpretation of the hypostatic union mean in reference to the Church? Torrance highlights the importance of Christ's atoning assumption of our human nature and parallels it with our communion with Christ which he understands as our being given to participate in the hypostatic union. In the former case, it was the One who represented the Many and, in the latter case, it is the Many who now represent the One, yet only on the basis of the former representation.[37] I interpret this train of thought as a dynamic reinterpretation of the nature of the Church in terms of its mission to the world on the basis of the dynamic reinterpretation of the hypostatic union (person) of Christ in terms of his mission for our salvation.

Secondly, Torrance points out on the basis of the concepts of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia* that though the atonement was supremely the act of God, the humanity of Christ has a full place within this divine action. "The manhood was integral and essential and not merely instrumental."[38] It was not simply the act of God *in* man but God *as* man. With respect to the hypostatic union, this means that in his substitutionary atonement, Christ took the enmity between God and man into his own flesh and actually intensified it. In him, man did not find shelter from God but was exposed to his judgment, face to face without any protection. Torrance then proceeds to apply this to the Church stating: "If such

35 Torrance, "The Atonement and the Oneness of the Church," 245-246.

36 Ibid., 247.

37 Ibid., 249.

38 Ibid., 250.

incorporation and substitution are the way of the Son of Man, they are the way of the Church as His Body."[39] He continues: "The only way the Church can follow Him is by way of *anhypostasia*, by way of self-denial and crucifixion, by letting Christ take its place and displace its self-assertion; and by way of *enhypostasia*, by way of incorporation and resurrection, by receiving from Christ the life which He has in Himself and which He gives His own."[40]

This application may not seem to be clear at first glance, and so it needs some explanation. *Anhypostasia* means that "in the *assumptio carnis* the human nature of Christ had no independent *per se* subsistence apart from the event of the Incarnation, apart from the hypostatic union."[41] Applied to the Church this means that the Church does not have an independent existence apart from the Lord who is its head. Torrance, however, does not stop at this point but speaks even of Christ's taking the place of the Church. The only idea that prevents Torrance at this point from Apollinarian error on the ecclesiological level is the inseparable bond between *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia*. Because the Church also has real *enhypostatic* existence within its relationship with Christ, its substitution is not equal with displacement. It expresses the openness of the Church to Christ's lordship over his Body. Substitution means in this case that the Church denies itself and its will in order to follow its Lord and his will.

Thirdly, Torrance turns to the application of the Christological analogy to the doctrine of the Church. He approaches it from different angles. Logically, the analogy is "a relation involving neither identity nor difference but something of likeness and something of difference *proportionaliter.*"[42] Christologically, it means the application of the Chalcedonian terms *inconfuse* (unconfusedly) and *inseparabiliter* (inseparably) to the relation between Christ and the Church.[43] Soteriologically, it involves the *mirifica commutatio* (wonderful exchange). "Thus the analogical relation between Christ and the Church reposes entirely upon what He has done for the Church by taking its place that it might be conformed to Him, and is maintained because Christ continues to live for the Church so that the life of the Church is to be found not in itself but in Him."[44] Pneumatologically, the Christological analogy refers to the fact that as the Word became flesh through the Spirit – though the flesh did not become the Word – it is through

39 Ibid., 252.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 249.

42 Ibid., 253. *Proportionaliter* means proportionally.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 254.

the Spirit that the Church is assumed by Christ as his body in an irreversible relationship.[45] Finally, Torrance summarizes the relation of Christ and his Church along the lines of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia*, asserting that the Church does not have an independent *hypostasis* apart from the atoning work of Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, but through incorporation into Christ it is given a real *hypostasis* and therefore a concrete function. This concrete function might be interpreted as a certain view of *imitatio Christi*: the Church analogically "bears about in its body the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus."[46] This is the ontological reality which is enveloped in the biblical assertion "the Church is the Body of Christ."

On the basis of the above mentioned Christological concepts, Torrance asserts the following issues concerning the Church. Firstly, the Church must be a *suffering servant*, "working out analogically in itself what happened in Christ for the Church, to fill up in its body that which is eschatologically in arrears of the sufferings of Christ and so to fulfil the Word of God."[47] It is in this way that the Church participates in the ministry of Christ. This participation has, however, further conditions to be mentioned. This leads us to the second point. The Church's participation in the ministry of Christ is analogical, involving likeness as well as difference. What happened to Christ *uniquely* happens also to his Church *in its way*.[48] Accordingly, the priesthood of Christ and of the Church must be *distinguished* as must also be his sacrifice and the Eucharistic action of the Church. Their *unity* and also the nature of their relation consists in the fact that the Church *serves* its Lord, entirely *subordinated* to him, and it is through its ministry that Christ carries out his own. Torrance, at this point, speaks even of the substitution of the Church by Christ, that the Church in its ministry allows Christ to displace the Church. It is Christ himself through his Holy Spirit who "fulfills His own ministry" in and through the Church.[49] Thirdly, Torrance interprets redemption as Christ entering our human existence, into the principles and structures of our fallen world, in order to justify us apart from the Law.[50] For the Church, sharing in that redemption means that principles and structures of this age, and therefore the historico-juridical forms of the Church,

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 256.

47 Ibid., 257.

48 Torrance cites from the report of the Faith and Order Conference at Lund.

49 Ibid., 257-59.

50 Torrance does not identify the worldly structures with sin but looks upon them as impregnated with sin in this age.

are relativized, that is, the Church is not fettered by them but freed to live within them and use them for its mission.[51]

The next topic Torrance deals with is that of ecclesial succession. He interprets the term *stoikheion* (succession) according to its meaning in the Epistles to the Galatians and the Colossians, that is, as a "temporal succession turned into a legal tradition or cosmological principle."[52] In this sense, *stoikheion* is demonic, seeking to usurp the authority of God. Christ, however, redeemed us from the tyrant force of *stoikheion*.[53] This relativizes the relation of the Church to historical succession. Torrance does not expound upon this but states that the Church "must learn [. . .] to use succession in Christ." He speaks similarly of tradition which may degenerate into an independent principle but can be correctly used "in terms of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Body of Christ."[54]

Finally, under the heading "The sacramental life of the Church," Torrance applies sacramentally the dynamic concept of hypostatic union (the mutual involution of incarnation and atonement) to the life of the Church. This means that he parallels incarnation and atonement with baptism and Eucharist. Both pairs are "dual moments in the one movement"; incarnation and atonement constitute the moment of redemption, while baptism and Eucharist constitute the moment of sanctification.[55] In the case of the sacraments this means that though both have to do with our incorporation into Christ clothed with his Gospel, baptism speaks of it as an abiding reality while in the Eucharist it is an eschatologically repeated event. In terms of unity this means that through baptismal incorporation the Church is given unity as a perfect reality; nevertheless this unity needs to be realized through continuous Eucharistic communion and growing up in the unity of faith. The way of the Church is growth from unity to unity in the fullness of Christ.[56] Baptism is the primary enactment and expression of the oneness of the Church, because in it we are incorporated into Christ in whom not only God and man have been inseparably bound together but also the divine judgment of man has been brought about. In our incorporation into Christ our sinful divisions are brought under that judgment and destroyed in Christ. The Eucharistic communion does not add

51 Ibid., 260-61.

52 Ibid., 263.

53 As in the case of worldly structures, succession in itself is not evil. See ibid., 264.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 265.

56 Ibid., 265-66.

anything to this incorporation and unity but renews the Church's oneness in Christ and anticipates its fullness to come in order to enable the Church to live out its unity in a broken and divided world.[57]

Finally, Torrance expands the topic of unity so as to center it on the topic of mission, asserting that "*the road to unity lies through atonement*" which denotes the "entering [of the Church] into Christ's passion for the redemption and unification of the broken and divided world."[58] In this way, unity and mission are essentially interwoven, and unity becomes a dynamic concept similar to that of the hypostatic union at the Christological level. This dynamic unity constitutes the foundation and essence, or the *esse* of the Church, which relativizes every other part of its life such as tradition and succession. The mission of the Church likewise becomes, in a certain sense, the *actualization* of the atoning work of Christ. "The Church is, so to speak, the atonement becoming actual among men in the resurrection of a new humanity."[59]

Now that we have overviewed these two specific studies, let us summarize our findings by identifying Torrance's primary ecclesiological principles.

Summary of Torrance's Ecclesiological Principles

As we have seen, Torrance sets out two principles in the first study we presented, both of which point in the same direction: 1) the unity of the Church is an eschatological reality both interpenetrating and transcending history that relativizes all ecclesiastical traditions; 2) the Eucharist has the same effect in that it relativizes our traditions and also judges and heals our divisions. These two principles speak of the same reality, because it is through the Eucharist that unity as an eschatological reality interpenetrates history. The Eucharistic principle, however, develops the first principle, because it points out that our unity is not a goal which we must try to reach through our ecumenical endeavors, but is rather a fully personal reality in Christ. In him, receiving his body and being his body, we become one. It is not something which we receive through the sacrament from the divine sphere above history, but it is Christ himself who communicates himself to us, giving himself, judging us, and healing our divisions by giving us participation in himself and therefore in his oneness. This becoming and being in relationship with Christ is the core idea of the second part of Torrance's article. Christ relates to his Church as his

57 Ibid., 266-267.

58 Ibid., 267.

59 Ibid., 268.

two natures relate to each other such that the Church is entirely subordinated to him and serves its Lord in humble mission. This relation serves as a basis for the *sacramental character* of the Church, whereby Christ communicates himself not only to the Church but through the Church to the world. Scripture, preaching, and sacraments are only means, but they are means whereby Christ is present to his Church and through the Church to the world. In this mission the Church is a "fellow-worker" with Christ in "holy synergism."[60] Finally, the mission of the Church has a universal scope, because it involves the realization of the new creation achieved in the new humanity of Christ throughout the world in need of redemption.

In the second study, the topics of the Church's sacramental character and holy synergism are detailed especially along the lines of the doctrines of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia*. Torrance even deepens the classical meaning of these doctrines in their application to the relation of the Church to its Lord. *Anhypostasia* means not only that the Church does not have independent existence apart from Christ, but that it has existence in Christ only if it lets itself be displaced by Christ. *Enhypostasia* means not only that the Church is given a real existence in its relation with Christ, but that the Church is entirely dependent on Christ who gives his own life to his Church.

In this way, Torrance is able to emphasize the Church's utter dependence on Christ as it participates in his mission such that holy synergism does not mean any independent co-working of the Church apart from Christ, because everything it does depends entirely on Christ's creative act in and through the Church in virtue of its sacramental character. Indeed, the participatory nature of the Church's mission means that it is actually Christ who is not only present in it but also at work through it. He is the one who fulfills his mission by means of the Church. However, the subsistence of the Church is not annulled by Christ but rather creatively upheld and fully used to serve the aim of its Lord. This is the nature of the Church, its dynamic nature at work in the mission of Christ. This is what makes the Church the Body of Christ. This is the *esse* of the Church[61] which relativizes every "outer form," worldly structure, and historical succession, yet frees them in Christ in order to be used for his mission.

The pattern of the hypostatic union serves as a framework for the whole system by which the divine and the human are related in Torrance's ecclesiological

60 Torrance, "Concerning Amsterdam I," 265.

61 In his *Conflict and Agreement in the Church, Vol. I*, 106, Torrance calls Christ the *esse* of the Church. My argument does not oppose this statement but intends to support it.

theology, giving constant priority to the divine over the human.[62] Moreover, the idea of substitutionary atonement gives dynamism to what Torrance deems as a static understanding of the hypostatic union which is then realized on the side of the Church as it serves its Lord, letting him fulfill his mission through the Church. In this mission the Church is almost identified at certain points with Christ; however, the firm Christological basis protects the importance of the Chalcedonian *inconfuse* in the Church's relation to Christ. The idea of the participatory nature of the Church's mission can be misleading, if it is interpreted as an underestimation of the visible Church. In light of the Church's sacramental character, however, this idea leads, on the contrary, to a high estimation of the Church, because it asserts nothing less than that in and through the Church it is Christ himself who is present and at work. In and through the Church it is the new creation which breaks into history and reconciles the world in its estrangement from God.

In conclusion, Torrance's ecclesiological views on the relation of Christ and his Church can be summed up in the following way: the pattern of the *hypostatic union* should be applied to the whole life of the Church by which it serves as the basis for the Church's *sacramental character*. This means that the Church and its whole life—Scripture, preaching, sacraments, mission, etc.—point away from themselves to the Church's Lord. It also means that the Church is utterly dependent on its Lord in whose mission it is given to participate. This derives from the dynamic reinterpretation of the hypostatic union and its application to the mission of the Church. "As in atoning reconciliation incorporation in Christ is on the ground of substitution, so in the ministry of reconciliation participation in that ministry is on the ground of substitution."[63] This is the way that the Church may really be the Body of Christ and whereby it can participate in fulfilling the mission of its Lord to the world.

62 Torrance writes: "The *unio hypostatica*, is, as it were, projected through the Holy Ghost [. . .] to form the relation between Christ and His Church, between the real presence and the bread and the wine in the Eucharist, between the divine Word and human speech in the *kerygma*". See ibid., 44. This pattern applies to every element of the Church, giving it its sacramental character.

63 Torrance, "The Atonement and the Oneness of the Church," 259.

REVIEWS

T. F. TORRANCE AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY: THEOLOGY IN RECONCILIATION

edited by Matthew Baker and Todd Speidell

Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2015. Paper, xi + 361pp.

This book is a remodeled version of the 2013 issue of *Participatio*, but there are some significant changes I will discuss below. The cover of the book features an icon of St. Athanasius whom T. F. Torrance claimed as his favorite theologian—a surprise choice over those generally preferred by the Reformed: Paul, Augustine, Calvin, or Karl Barth. As its title suggests, this book focuses on Torrance's relationship to Eastern Orthodoxy, and at the center of this relationship is the study of the Church Fathers. Torrance himself claims, "The Greek Fathers remain my main love and I repair to them all the time, and learn from them more than from any other period or set of theologians in Church History" (323).

The book's layout mirrors the original order of the journal articles and is divided into three parts: "Historical Background and Memoirs," "Essays Patristic and Constructive," and "Primary Sources."

I read this book backwards, starting first with "The Correspondence between T. F. Torrance and Georges Florovsky (1950-1973)," edited by the inimitable Fr. Matthew Baker. Baker, awarded a Ph.D. posthumously by Fordham, provides an excellent introduction to the letters selected for this chapter. Some of the interactions are important than others. The meaty selections like "1," "14," and "17" sandwich shorter letters where Torrance seems primarily preoccupied with securing Florovsky's essays and reviews for inclusion in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. Torrance claims at one point: "It looks as if I am the base sort of man who only writes when he wants something!" (305). Nevertheless, it is clear from reading these letters that the men had a fruitful relationship and that Torrance learned a great deal from Florovsky, his senior. The correspondence, over a twenty-year timespan, also demonstrates a progression in Torrance's engagement with and acceptance of certain aspects of Orthodox theology. As one example, Baker points to the difference between Torrance's earlier negative

understanding of deification as "extremely un-Hebraic and un-biblical" and Torrance's later, more positive understanding of participation in God.

As I read the primary sources before turning to the other sections of the book, I was struck by a parenthetical statement made by Torrance in an address about the potential Orthodox contributions to the church in Great Britain. There, Torrance delivers a bombshell: "[The Reformation] called for a recovery of the evangelical doctrine of justification by grace (nowhere better expounded in all the history of theology than by the impeccably orthodox Cyril of Alexandria)" (326)! Matthew Baker clearly anticipated that this provocative statement needed further elucidation, since Torrance himself never elaborated on it. Baker suggested to Donald Fairbairn that he explore this topic further, which he does quite well in his essay which is also included in this book: "Justification in St. Cyril of Alexandria, with Some Implications for Ecumenical Dialogue." There, Fairbairn shows how Cyril used as synonyms the Greek terms normally translated as "justification" and "sanctification." While such identification might not seem to seem to be a firm ground to base Orthodox and Reformed dialogue, Fairbairn claims that the primary point of contact for Cyril and Protestants is the "*passive* nature of the Christian's righteousness" (144) given by God from without, not earned from within.

Baker's other contributions to this book are also noteworthy. He writes the "Introductory Essay" and conducts an interview with Protopresbyter G. D. Dragas, one of Torrance's former students. The interview itself is fascinating, and Torrance's influence on Dragas is clear. At one point, Dragas says of an important moment in his life, "Although I recognize the grace of God in all this, I have no doubt that Torrance was God's primary agent" (7). To me, the most captivating part of the interview is when Dragas gives a candid description of his ecumenical collaboration with Torrance. Torrance appeared to be full of hope, creativity, and energy when it came to working with the Orthodox, but Dragas points out some of the potential pitfalls Torrance would encounter. Dragas says, "My main problem was his insistence of putting his 'Athanasian-Cyrillian axis' (his term) against the 'Orthodox Cappadocian deviation' (his term also)" (14). Dragas found this tendency to pit Father against Father to be quite un-Orthodox (although he accuses Zizioulas of the same in the interview). Dragas closes out the interview by offering a helpful critique of both Torrance's and Zizioulas' Trinitarian theology wherein he points out where he believes both are right and where both are wrong.

Of the two new essays added to this collection, one is by Jason Radcliff, author of *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers: A Reformed, Evangelical, and*

Ecumenical Reconstruction of the Patristic Tradition (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), a suggested companion volume to this book being reviewed. In his essay, Radcliff offers a descriptive overview of Torrance's ecumenical work pulled largely from The Thomas F. Torrance Manuscript Collection held by Princeton Theological Seminary (http://manuscripts.ptsem.edu/collection/223). Radcliff also seeks to clarify the true targets of Torrance's seeming criticism of certain Church Fathers. Radcliff argues that when Torrance is criticizing the Cappadocians, Gregory Palamas, and Augustine, his real opponents are actually John Zizioulas, Vladimir Lossky, and "Augustinianism" (the reception and radicalization of certain of Augustine's thoughts). Radcliff offers hope that Reformed and Orthodox dialogue could be benefitted through a more precise focus on the Fathers, and not on the Fathers' reception by later thinkers. My only small quibble with this essay is the types Radcliff uses to characterize Reformed and Orthodox reception of the Fathers: Word-based (Christocentric) versus Church-based (synthetic). A more accurate distinction is probably between a narrower-selective approach and a broader-synthetic approach, even though Radcliff claims that both sides have (and should have) their "favorite" Fathers.

The other new essay is "T. F. Torrance and the Christological Realism of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria" by Emmanuel Gergis. In Torrance, Gergis believes he finds an ally in interpreting the theological legacy of Athanasius and Cyril, because he claims that Torrance rejected the dualism associated with the Latin reception of the Council of Chalcedon in favor of a more united (and more truly Alexandrian) view of Christ. In particular, Gergis credits Torrance with providing the proper interpretation of the non-Chalcedonian position on Christ's *mia physis* by reintroducing the works of John Philoponos and disconnecting *physis* from *natura*.

The other articles not examined in this review are still worthy of consideration. Many of them suggest figures to use as fruitful foci for future ecumenical dialogue between Reformed and Orthodox like Maximus the Confessor, Ephrem the Syrian, Mark the Monk, and Dimitru Stanilaoe. Other essays by Asproulis, Tanev, and Nesteruk explore important aspects of Torrance's thought and should not be missed.

T. F. Torrance and Eastern Orthodoxy: Theology in Reconciliation is a tremendous achievement and well worth reading. The book is incredibly layered, with personal remembrances, archival research, secondary studies, and primary sources working together to produce a well-rounded image of Torrance, constructed by those who knew him, by those who studied him, and by his own words. I found myself flipping back and forth among the three sections

of the book, because they reinforced each other so well. Throughout the book, Torrance is shown to be a powerful theologian whose system of friendships and professional relationships brought together diverse minds to think collectively on common theological problems. It is quite telling that most of the contributors to this book honoring Torrance are Orthodox. If the editors hoped that this publication would encourage readers to better appreciate the great legacy of T. F. Torrance, it is a resounding success. I, for one, look forward to reading more works by Torrance and, of course, the Church Fathers.

Jeremy David Wallace

TRINITY AND TRANSFORMATION:

J. B. Torrance's Vision of Worship, Mission, and Society

edited by Todd H. Speidell

Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016, 306pp., $37.00

Of the three Torrance brothers of Scotland, Thomas, James, and David, James B. Torrance is not as well-known as the namesake of this organization, Thomas F. Torrance. Having published only one book during his lifetime (although along with many scholarly articles), that is not surprising. But to those who were mentored by James in a doctoral program at the University of Aberdeen, or sat under his warm, stimulating lectures given from Scotland, California, South Africa, to Australia, a broad smile cannot help but come over our faces. This collection of essays by his former students exploring his theological legacy reflects the deep influence J. B. Torrance had on decades of students thirsty for a theology that deeply reflected the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Among the many essays presented here, we can only mention a few. The volume has an attractive separation into "Tributes" and "Essays," but does not avoid separating James Torrance from his theology, the personality from his love of the triune God and the joy he took in theology.

One is struck by the *wholeness* of James' theology, as it was seamlessly reflected in his life. This was often seen in his strong concern for social ethics. His lecture tour in South Africa during the apartheid years is well-known, along with his critique of a Calvinism whose "nature/grace" dualism would open the door to such thinking. Roger Newell develops this thought in a masterful essay on the Stuttgart Declaration on German war guilt after World War II and the implications of JBT's running theme of repentance not being the cause of forgiveness of sin, but as flowing from grace. His "radically inclusive" view of "the triune God of grace" was reflected in his own life and sensed by those around him. A doctrine of "limited atonement" did not speak to him of the God of the incarnation. (It was surprising to learn that he was once a youth pastor working under the well-known advocate of limited atonement, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones!) James' hospitality in his own life, as Jeremy Begbie points out, reflects his belief in a hospitable God.

The influence of James Torrance's thought on covenant and contract in the work of the noted Pauline New Testament scholar Douglas Campbell is represented by an essay by Campbell himself, "Covenant or Contract in the Interpretation of Paul." This article certainly reminds us of the continuing need for dialogue between biblical scholars and theologians. Unlike many of his fellow biblical scholar colleagues, Campbell is not afraid to do so. Will theologians respond in kind?

There are some added little delights in the book. The trinitarian-incarnational diagram, which he drew countless times in class, is here ("Have you seen my diagram?" James always predictably asked a new theological acquaintance.) Of course, the diagram continues to live on in the chalkboards, whiteboards, and PowerPoint presentations of his many students who teach today! (I had one student, bless her heart, make a quilt for me of the "double movement of grace"!) The hymn that James actually composed, based on the vicarious prayers of Christ, "I Know Not How to Pray," is here. So also is the "get well" greeting from Karl Barth when James, then one of Barth's students in Basel, broke his leg while skiing! The editor is most of all to be commended, however, for including a short writing of James' himself to remind the reader of the man. One cannot do better than "The Unconditional Freeness of Grace," published obscurely in Tom Smail's *Theological Renewal,* a charismatic journal. It is a jewel that touches upon so many of JBT's major themes. In my opinion, this is the one essay to give to anyone in becoming acquainted with James Torrance.

The volume is not lacking in a few critiques of JBT's thought. Even his son Alan questions whether James was too easy on Calvin, not admitting the presence of "double predestination" as well as in the later scholastic Calvinists. Alexandra Radcliff, in her essay, "James B. Torrance and the Doctrine of Sanctification," confronts one of the crucial questions facing JBT's theology: "If everything is done for one in Christ . . . what is left then for me to do?" This is an issue that the late John Webster raised concerning one of James' favorite doctrines which he shared with his brothers, the vicarious humanity of Christ. Stephan May's related article, "'Thrown Back Upon Ourselves': James Torrance's Critique of Pelagianism in Christian Life and Worship" further explores this issue of "our response" in a masterful way, exposing how all-pervasive conditional repentance can be in our traditions and our need for the vicarious response of Christ. The short yet powerful chapter by Graham Redding on "Prayer and the Priesthood of Christ" reminds us of the importance of the priesthood of Christ in JBT's theology and its essential place in his theology of prayer as seeking "the mind of Christ." Andrew Torrance discusses the distinction between *prescriptive* "ifs" (*if* you do

or do not something, you will be blessed or cursed) and *descriptive* "ifs" (*if* you do something as a description of the relationship, as in 1 John 1:9, *if* you confess your sins, he is faithful to forgive them). The issue of conditional versus unconditional grace in Calvin and JBT is also developed in depth by Andrew Torrance, responding to many objections of scholastic Calvinists.

Essays are present that attend to James Torrance the teacher as well. "A Pedagogy of Grace" by Michael Jinkins, "Learning from Teaching" by Jeremy Begbie, and "Fifteen Years of Teaching *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*" by Kerry Dearborn, bear witness to the impact of JBT's teaching worldwide. (This writer can also testify to the impact of *Worship* on my teaching. It was the essential jewel in teaching a graduate course, "Dimensions of Worship," for over twenty years. In some ways, it may be the all-around best "first book" for those starting to study theology.)

Jeremy Begbie rightly observes that in JBT's teaching (or research and writing) he did not feel the need to cover all subjects (creation and eschatology are absent), and this frees the student from trying to master everything. Nonetheless, Tim Dearborn's essay on the implications of James' theology for missions demonstrates that some basic themes of James' theology, for example, in missions, can be used for theological exploration in the future. Dearborn has found that the "Who" before the "How" motif is particularly relevant for Missiology ("From Pragmatism to Participation: the Impact of Trinitarian Faith on Missiology").

In summary, for anyone who has ever heard or read James B. Torrance, this volume is a sheer delight. For those who have not, this is a fine introduction to his continuing legacy.

Christian D. Kettler

THE RELUCTANT MINISTER

Memoirs by David W. Torrance

Edinburgh, The Handsel Press Ltd, 2015, 309p

In this fascinating and informative autobiography David Torrance relates in self-deprecating and simple style the story of a life lived in the service of Christ. In anecdote after anecdote, he describes the joys and challenges of well over fifty years of ministry in Scotland in the latter half of the twentieth century. Spanning the years from his birth in 1924 as the youngest of the six Torrance children born in China to his retirement in 1991, the memoirs are packed with the distilled wisdom of one of Scotland's most distinguished ministers. Here is an account of the way in which the same theology that was worked out by his two elder brothers, first in the ministry and then in the university, was worked out in the day-to-day reality of parish ministry.

Although originally written for the family record and not intended for publication, there is nevertheless plenty here to enjoy, both for the general reader and for those with a particular interest in Torrance theology. His vivid memories of early childhood and youth, his parents, brothers, friends, and wider family offer a snapshot of the Torrance family in China and pre-war Scotland. And while not overtly theological, the theology underpinning Torrance's faith and understanding of ministry is implicit throughout. One of the Appendices contains a beautifully concise summary of the person and work of Christ and Torrance's own reflections on the task of ministry.

Despite having committed his life to Christ at the age of five "at my mother's knee," Torrance resisted the call to ministry for some years. It was not until he was in India as a soldier during the Second World War that he finally accepted his vocation. Returning to his unit after contracting and surviving smallpox, he experienced a crisis. "Toward the end of the third day, as I approached my tent and entered, I knew that God was in that tent. I did not see him but I felt as if physically I could touch him." God said, "The ministry!" Torrance said, "No!" In the ensuing struggle, Torrance felt God catching him "by the scruff of the neck" and, knowing that he would have no peace if he continued to refuse, he knelt on the bare ground and prayed "the most disgruntled prayer" he had ever prayed: "All right Lord, I will be a minister and it's your look-out!" (pp. 58-9).

After leaving the army he returned to Edinburgh to recommence his university studies. Like his brothers Tom and James before him, David was Dux of New College. He notes with quiet satisfaction that his total marks over all three years of study beat those of his brother Tom by half a mark. He graduated in 1953 with an honours BD with Distinction, having won ten prizes and scholarships. Although his student marks were just as good as those of his brothers, he was convinced that God was calling him to parish ministry and evangelism and not to an academic career. He broke off his doctoral studies under Barth and Cullman to enter parish ministry and later turned down a lectureship at New College in order to remain in ministry, a decision he has never regretted.

Throughout the book, the record of Torrance's work as a minister is interwoven with his invaluable insights into ministry itself. For Torrance, there is only one minister; our ministry is participation through the Holy Spirit in the one ministry of Jesus. Burn-out in the ministry happens when we think and act "as though it is we who are ministers and that the work of the church depends on us" (p. 283).

At the heart of ministry is prayer. "The men and women who have accomplished most in the ministry are the men and women who each day have spent time in prayer" (p. 270). As ambassadors for Christ, ministers are "called to live close to the Lord" (p. 269), to know him intimately, encounter him day by day in prayer and scripture and experience his grace in their own and others' lives. Wherever at all possible or appropriate, Torrance prayed and read the bible in every home he visited.

Preaching should focus all attention on Christ. Torrance notes with sadness that "the vast amount of our preaching as ministers is concerned with telling people what to do," which just encourages "a subtle form of works and not a gospel of grace" (p. 124). The task of preaching is to proclaim Christ in his finished work and to encourage people to live out the new life which Christ has lived out vicariously for us. Instead of drawing attention to themselves, preachers must slip into the background. True preaching "is where people hear God speaking, not man" (p. 136).

Ministry can never be a one-man show, but is to be shared by the whole congregation. There is a great need today to enable all the members of the Church to exercise their gifts. A measure of Torrance's success in equipping members of his congregations to use their gifts is the sheer number of them who entered the ministry. Thirteen became ministers, three trained as lay readers, five became overseas missionaries, some ten or eleven took evening

classes in theology at New College, five of whom gained a diploma, and many others took up positions of leadership in the church.

Torrance insists that the foundation of faith is laid in childhood and youth. In all his charges a major part of his work was youth ministry. Concerned with the theological meaning and interpretation of what was being taught to the children in Sunday School, he prepared the lessons in advance with the teachers and personally led the bible classes, youth fellowships, and youth camps.

Running through the book is a strong vein of humour, often directed at himself. He describes clinging helplessly to his horse's neck as it bolted on an expedition in India. He recalls a summer mission in Sutherland, braving the single-track highland roads in an antiquated car, his seat precariously propped up on a pile of hymn books to prevent his toppling over on the bends. As a student assistant minister, no weakling and still fresh from army service, he confesses to having simultaneously wrestled three unruly youths to the ground to restore order at a youth club. Two of the boys in that club subsequently entered the ministry. One evening, rushing to tend his bees before taking a service, he was so badly stung that he almost fainted during the service. He ruefully remarks, "Each time a bee stung what hurt me most was my conscience!" (p. 202)

Torrance often took up causes, at times pursuing them with dogged determination. He successfully challenged the breweries in court to prevent a license to sell alcohol being granted in Livingston New Town. He took on the case of someone he believed had been poorly treated by the Scottish Bible Society and persevered until he won. He succeeded in persuading a reluctant local education authority to remove the progressive headmaster of a school in which discipline had been thrown to the winds.

Not one to obfuscate, Torrance could be forthright if he felt the need. He told one agnostic that he was "either on the road to heaven or to hell" and that he was on the road to the latter. Another agnostic was informed that a more accurate description was "ignoramus." A mother who complained about her sons refusing to attend church was told that she was setting a bad example by not attending herself.

At a time when the Church is facing enormous challenges and often seems tempted to regard theology as being of little practical value, here is a vivid reminder of the harvest to be reaped from holding together the theological, pastoral, and corporate aspects of ministry. Torrance's unswerving focus on Christ and trust in the relevance of his gospel for every single person he met had a profound impact. In encounters with people from all walks of life and

all backgrounds, churchgoers, the unchurched, atheists, agnostics, humanists, and bigots, he communicated Christ in ways that related theology to peoples' everyday experience. This was a ministry that touched and changed lives.

Jennifer Floether

FULLY HUMAN IN CHRIST:

The Incarnation as the End of Christian Ethics

Todd H. Speidell. Eugene, OR

Wipf and Stock, 2016. 152pp.

Todd H. Speidell, Lecturer in Theology at Montreat College, Editor of *Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*, and General Editor of *The Ray S. Anderson Collection*, has produced a very stimulating volume of reflections that develop a robust and nuanced trinitarian-incarnational social ethic. Speidell draws widely from Church Fathers to Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ray S. Anderson, John Macmurray, James Torrance, and Thomas F. Torrance. His choice of T. F. Torrance as a conversation partner in this particular project may seem odd to some (since Torrance did not devote a significant amount of his writing to explicit ethical themes) – an issue Speidell takes up in his very first chapter.

Speidell was my first seminary professor, and his course on Christian Ethics was my first introduction to the theological model utilized here. That course altered the trajectory of my theological development. It did so because Speidell was a gracious and tenacious teacher, determined to coax out of my soul the contractual fundamentalism of my youth in order to encourage in me a sustainable and empowering faith. For that I will always be grateful.

But that transformation was born of conflict – regular, predictable, and emotionally upsetting every Friday night from 6-9. Now, some years later, and after having (happily) taken on board a number of Speidell's theological assumptions, I find myself having a few conflicts with Speidell again, although for very different reasons, and with regard to assumptions that are not as deep. But first, the general contours of the book.

The six chapters (and two appendices) of *Fully Human in Christ* have been previously published. Speidell collects and revises them (in some cases substantively) into a cohesive theological argument that he has carried on with himself and others over the years. That is a strength of the book. Paramount is Speidell's concern that a Christian social ethic ought to enable one to make progress toward the affirmation of differences in ways that promote reconciliation, not polarized division or parochial privilege. An ethic that is "autonomous" (and

as such cannot be a *Christian* ethic) seeks to "be good and do good" through compliance to a moral vision that isolates human agency from the agency of God in Christ. Understanding morality in this autonomous way, according to Speidell, throws human persons back upon themselves and into a self-justifying, self-defeating, person-undermining, and neighbor-marginalizing ethic of legalistic moralism and systemic conflict. Instead, Speidell argues that the incarnation is the "end" or abrogation of anthropocentric ethics (including some that go by the name of "Christian ethics") and the establishment of a genuine christocentric ethic based on the vicarious humanity of Christ.

Chapter One ("The Soteriological Suspension of Ethics in the Theology of T. F. Torrance") is foundational to Speidell's overall ethical vision and is composed in conversation with the theology of T. F. Torrance, particularly as others have criticized him for lacking ethical emphases and a robust view of human agency. It is a substantive articulation of the myriad resources in Torrance's thought for the development of a trinitarian-incarnational social ethic. Speidell takes particular aim at the critiques of John Webster and David Fergusson, both of whom fault Torrance for not spending much of his corpus engaged with ethical themes. They then go further to suggest that this lack of engagement might be a sign of internal deficiencies in Torrance's overall theological vision. Speidell confronts these critiques straight on, identifying multiple ways in which an ethical vision is implicit throughout Torrance's theological work, and then demonstrating that vision explicitly at work on a number of issues engaged by Torrance himself (women in ministry, abortion, God-language, etc). Speidell extends the development of this model into Chapter Two ("Incarnational Social Ethics") where he looks more closely at the issue of homosexuality (gay ordination, marriage, and rights) and in explicit conversation with one of Torrance's students, Ray S. Anderson. Speidell's work in these two chapters will, at the very least, force those critical of Torrance's theological ethic (or the absence thereof, as they see it) to focus their critiques more narrowly, if they venture into such critiques at all.

Chapter Three ("A Christological Critique of Adjectival Theologies") and Chapter Four ("A Trinitarian Ontology of Persons in Society") were the most suggestive and constructive for this reviewer, and in my opinion the arguments of Chapter Three would have been much helped if the framework/argument of Chapter Four had come first. But this is only to nitpick. There are exceptional resources here, theologically and ethically, for the challenges that contextual/adjectival/anthropocentric theologies pose to the theological/ethical model developed throughout the book. The conceptuality in Chapter Four provides a flexible and nuanced set of criteria for helping one think theologically and ethically about

what it means to initiate and sustain truly personal and personalizing relations in diverse social groups (such relations must be "suprapersonal, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and infrapersonal").

Speidell is more critical of liberation theology than I, evidenced in his assertion that Boff's "theological framework . . . often reverts to slogans that supplant a realistic discussion that evaluates which societies actually liberate" (94). Why "slogans"? What entails "a realistic discussion"? Are Boff's formulations any more an example of sloganeering than when Speidell continuously refers us to "the vicarious humanity of Christ" or "participation in the triune God of grace"? In spite of these concerns Speidell does a fantastic job of providing the reader with a broad and flexible theological framework (Chapter Four in particular), robust theological resources from theologians past and present, and a myriad of concrete examples and case studies that attempt to work out the implications of his theological assumptions for ethical issues, both "personal" and "social" (a regrettable distinction in ethics, as Speidell himself notes).

The final two chapters ("The Humanity of God and the Healing of Humanity" and "Theological Anthropology as a Basis for Christian Ethics in the Theology of Ray S. Anderson") bring the work of Ray Anderson to the forefront in Speidell's reflections, and in particular Anderson's exceptional work in the development of a theological anthropology and its ethical/pastoral implications. Again, the great value in these two chapters is seeing Speidell improvise with the various assumptions of his theological model with regard to additional ethical cases such as those having to do with themes of social justice (Chapter 5, where human diversity, education, and abortion are briefly treated), and a whole chapter devoted to the culturally prevalent problem of alcoholism (Chapter 6).

In sum, this is a very welcome and rich book that articulates a distinctively theological ethic based on God's grace in Christ, and one that I will be reading again and again – allowing Speidell's instruction once more into my theological development. Gladly so.

Eric Flett

THEOLOGY IN TRANSPOSITION:

A Constructive Appraisal of T. F. Torrance

Myk Habets

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013, 227pp.

When Alfred North Whitehead once quipped that Christianity is a "religion in search of a metaphysic," he might equally have said that Christianity is a religion in search of a method. A tireless opponent of every sort of dualism, T. F. Torrance would no doubt be the first to tell us the two are inextricable: metaphysics begets method; method begets metaphysics. Such interconnections can provide richness, but they can also invoke a bit of despair—much as trying to disentangle a thread that never ends. Peering upon the vast array of contemporary and historical theologies is not quite to gaze into the abyss, but even many canny theologians have nonetheless fallen into the pit of method never to climb back out again.[1]

Indeed, even the terse "a religion in search of . . ." can hardly be spoken these days without the caveat that to conceptualize Christianity as a "religion" is already to freight it with an assortment of methodological tendencies that emerged when the category was forged in the modern period.[2] Other factors, like the development of religion as a "worldview,"[3] and even the fallout from the internal disintegration of many ambitious theological projects[4] or exterior challenges from other disciplines, [5] haunt and refract theological methodology like a great hall of mirrors.

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1 Francesca Aran Murphy, *God Is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: O.U.P., 2007) argues that for many, method has itself subtly replaced the actual content of theology.

2 Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2015).

3 David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 2002).

4 For example, Johannes Zachuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth Century: From F.C. Bauer to Ernst Troeltsch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). And of course the famous (and much contested) thesis of Hans Blumenberg, that secular modernity had to build itself up from the ruins theology failed to uphold. See: *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985).

5 John Allen Knight, *Liberalism Versus Postliberalism: The Great Divide in Twentieth Century Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), helpfully organizes his interlocutors around how they deal with, or circumvent, the problem of "falsification" regarding theological statements.

What we need no doubt is a giant upon whose shoulders we might stand. Luckily the 20th century was something of a theological garden, growing giants from which to choose. But this too, has difficulties. Harvesting the method of a von Balthasar, a Barth, a Pannenberg, or—in this case—a Torrance, is itself no small matter. Luckily with his volume *Theology in Transposition,* Myk Habets has done us a great favor in distilling Torrance's clear-sighted method. There have been a number of helpful books on aspects of Torrance's methodology lately—from Eric Flett's excellent look into Torrance's Trinitarian theology of culture and the concept of "social coefficients," to Jason Radcliff's much-needed investigation into how Torrance retrieves the Fathers of the church in comparison with other projects of *ressourcement*.[6] But as of yet (as far as I know of) there has been no monograph devoted to the topic of Torrance's method *per se*.

Habets has proven himself to be one of the world's leading Torrance scholars, and this volume only reinforces that reputation. From the sprawling *oeuvre* of Torrance comes a concise and clear study that begins with a short theological biography, moving on to chapters regarding his "scientific theology," "natural theology," and "realist theology." The second half of the book deals with the outworking of that methodology in practice, focusing on the mystical, integrative, and Christological elements of Torrance's work respectively (particularly interesting, the last chapter focuses on the fascinating topic of Christ assuming a *fallen* humanity).

And that disorienting hall of mirrors we spoke of earlier? Torrance (via Habets) arranges and polishes them so that they are no longer a labyrinthine regress, but each mirror becomes rather a looking glass, one lain on top of the other as each provides its own magnification for our gaze moving upward through them, looking now to man, now to world, now to God. Or, put more properly in Torrance's own terms:

> We select a few basic concepts in our experience and apprehension of the world, try to work out their interconnections, and organize them into a coherent system of thought through which like a lens we can gain a more accurate picture of the hidden patterns and coherences embedded in the world. (Quoted in Habets, 30).

Torrance in this quote is specifically speaking about the methodology of science – but herein lay part of his brilliance as he outlines the analogies between scientific and theological method. Habets masterfully picks out that one of Torrance's

6 Eric G. Flett, *Persons, Powers, and Pluralities: Toward a Trinitarian Theology of Culture* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Jason Robert Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers: A Reformed, Evangelical, and Ecumenical Reconstruction* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

"few basic concepts" presents theology, like science, operating *kata physin* or "according to the nature [of its object]":

> [E]pistemology is founded on or correlated with ontology. This holds throughout Torrance's method and theology. . . . Torrance holds that the distinctive nature of theology is determined by its object, which is defined as God revealed in Jesus Christ. Hence theology, and any and every other true science . . . is under an intrinsic obligation to give account of reality according to its distinct nature, that is *kata physin* . . . [Torrance] goes on to argue that 'science in every field of our human experience, is only the rigorous extension of that basic way of thinking and behaving' (46).

As such, Habets stresses for Torrance that the Nicene *homoousios* actually provides the entire structure for theology as a science: "By utilizing the doctrine of the *homoousion* and *perichoresis* we are moved (epistemologically) from the experience of God (level one) to the theological level (the economic Trinity), finally to the deep theological and scientific structures upon which the first two levels rest (ontological Trinity)" (38).

This does not isolate theology from other disciplines. Rather because Christ is the true vision of creation, creation is "proleptically conditioned by redemption" (156). Just so, Habets turns to the fascinating discussion of how Torrance rehabilitates natural theology by situating it precisely *within* theology. Here again, those labyrinths of methodological mirrors are reordered so that "nature" is not a principle freestanding from robust theological interests, but is viewed through "sanctified spectacles" (74). "Natural theology can no longer be undertaken apart from actual knowledge of the living God," as Torrance himself puts it (quoted in Habets, 84). Torrance famously likens this methodological decision to Einstein's situation of geometry within physics, so that "No longer extrinsic, but intrinsic to actual knowledge of God [natural theology] will serve as a sort of 'theological geometry' within it, in which we are concerned to articulate the inner material logic of the knowledge of God as it is mediated within the organized field of space time." When Torrance explained this to Barth, the Swiss theologian is reported to have responded: "I must have been a blind hen not to have seen that analogy before" (84). One stands amazed at this concession by Barth, if for no other reason than the respect for sighted hens he must have!

With this discussion, Habets plunges into the debate on just what to make of Torrance's resituating of natural theology. Does it still open itself to use in "strong" apologetics (as Alister McGrath has created his own small cottage industry in arguing)? Was Torrance still Barthian, allowing no place for natural theology except on the few occasions he was inconsistent with this resolve (Paul Molnar's thesis)?

Or, should what Torrance is doing more properly be called a "theology of nature" rather than "natural theology" (here Elmer Colyer and Travis McMacken are cited, though one might add Stanley Hauerwas in *With the Grain of the Universe*);[7] or, as Habets himself argues, is there room for a "soft apologetic" role to natural theology (86)? Whatever the conclusion, Habets himself notes that Molnar is right to point out a touch of inconsistency in Torrance: can nature only be seen within the "lens" of revealed theology? Or does nature of its own accord "silently cry out" for an explanation that must be beyond itself (91)? To this question Habets very helpfully distinguishes between a natural revelation, (which creates the possibility of scientific inquiry without serving as a foundation for faith), natural theology, which Habets notes "can be used evangelistically by Christians," and a "Trinitarian theology of nature" which is the full-orbed vision of Torrance's synthesis (92).

In this same vein, in one of the more fascinating sections of the book Habets recounts the arguments that went on between Torrance and the Princetonian Carl F. Henry (95-110). The basic outlines of their debate mirror that of Torrance's placing natural theology back within revealed theology, only now it is scripture and reason that are placed within the doctrine of God's self-revelation in redemption. Here, instead of "natural theology" remaining autonomous, Henry advocates rather for a "soft foundationalism" where the mind and rationality remain independent of the fall or redemption (106). Torrance wants to place scripture within the reality of God as witness to God: conversely, for Henry "faith is placed in scripture directly rather than that to which Scripture bears witness—God's being and act" (112). Habets notes that Torrance—in what he also elaborates as Torrance's "mystical" side (125-145)—is ceaselessly referring us to God's reality *itself,* that is: "not to mistake Scripture for the truths it seeks to reveal" (112). Ultimately Habets mediates between Torrance and Henry here, saying "we must see scripture *is* divine revelation, regardless of whether one is in union with Christ" but that the *skopos* of scripture points *to* Christ (121).

When one tries to follow in the footsteps of giants, inevitably we mere mortals stand outpaced. Boot-like craters in impossible spans fill the horizon as we breathlessly huff on. It is therefore helpful at the very least to have a map showing that toward which the footfalls tend. Habets has provided us one such map for seeking a giant like Torrance through the overgrown landscapes of theology. There are still deficits in Torrance to be sure (which Habets points out). For example, as a theologian so intent to overcome all dualisms, Torrance often remains surprisingly focused on the realm of the intellect (141), while ignoring

7 Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness as Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001).

the possibilities of bodily signification. One does not, of course, necessarily exclude the other. Yet, emphasizing bodily practices and representation like Sarah Coakley and others have suggested, would greatly increase the scope of Torrance's argumentation.[8] Torrance's continual allegiance to equating "Greek philosophy" with his bogeyman of "dualism" also weakens his case, especially with the arguments of those like Pierre Hadot who represent philosophy not as world-denial but in fact as a way of life.[9] Moreover, the force in Torrance's clarity of vision regarding the tradition can be a weakness as well as his strength. Reading the *Trinitarian Faith* is a joy, for example, but its thematic rather than historical organization stamps that joy with a question mark.[10] I would have appreciated Habets addressing whether one can maintain Torrance's singular vision in the face of increasingly nuanced and self-reflective appropriations of theological tradition,[11] or in the face of narratives "placing" the tradition into halls of heroes and villains equal but opposite to Torrance.[12] Nevertheless, Habets' work is not just a book for Torrance aficionados. He has written an investigation that anyone interested in theological method should have on their shelves.

Derrick Peterson

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8 Sarah Coakley, "Dark Contemplation and Epistemic Transformation: The Analytic Theologian Re-Meets Teresa of Avila," in Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea, eds., *Analytic Theology: New Essays on the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 280-312. "Only a closer attention to the subtleties of mystical discourse itself (including its apophatic maneuvers), and to its *accompanying and repetitive bodily practices* [emphasis added] can help the analytic tradition beyond its usual confines of expectation at this point." (282-283). Here also refer to the essential analysis of bodily resurrection in Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body* (New York: Colombia University, 1995); and the political and social significance of the body in Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

9 Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2014).

10 Frances Young, "From Suspicion and Sociology to Spirituality: On Method, Hermeneutics, and Appropriation With Respect to Patristic Material," in E. Livingston, ed., *Studia Patristica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 424: "it is not chronology but logic that determines the sequence [of *The Trinitarian Faith*]."

11 Morwenna Ludlow, *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and Postmodern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15-37. 82-97; Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers*, 139-140; 194. Of interest as well would have been a more than tangential encounter with the work of Richard Muller (e.g.) on reception of the Reformed tradition. See: *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

12 Most recently, cf. Adrian Pabst, *Metaphysics: The Creation of Hierarchy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012).

ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FILIOQUE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

edited by Myk Habets

New York: T&T Clark, 2014, 272pp. $39.95

"Oh East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," or so goes the first line to Rudyard Kipling's famous poem. Some of the most fruitful moments in recent Trinitarian theology have been attempts to ensure that the poem not turn to prophecy. About three decades ago the strategy for the meeting of the ways generally amounted to the academic version of a spiritual travelogue, with theologians exhorting the West to "go East." More recently, the meeting of East and West has occurred in projects like those of Lewis Ayres, Marcus Plested, or Anna Williams, unearthing common modes and manners of theologizing that are inevitably obscured when well-worn historical tropes of standard East-West differences are invoked too readily. While nuanced dissent to some of these projects has come (for example in David Bradshaw's excellent *Aristotle East and West*), they have by most estimates been successful at building new bridges over old divides.

The troll under the ecumenical bridge has remained the *filioque*, nonetheless—or as Edward Siecienski writes in his essay in the present volume, it is "a landmine on the road to unity" (19). The second line of Kipling's poem laments that the divide of East and West will remain "'Till earth and sky stand presently at God's judgment seat." With a wry sense of humor, Jaroslav Pelikan has a similarly eschatological pessimism for the *filioque*:

> If there is a special circle of the inferno described by Dante reserved for historians of theology, the principle homework assigned to that subdivision of hell or at least the first several eons of eternity may well be the thorough study of all the treatises—in Latin, Greek, Church Slavonic, and various modern languages—devoted to the inquiry: Does the *Holy Spirit* proceed from the Father only, as Eastern Christendom contends, or from both the Father and the Son (*ex Patre Filioque*), as the Latin church teaches?[1]

1 Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Melody of Theology: A Philosophical Dictionary* (Cambrdige: Harvard University Press, 1988), 90.

It is thus not a trivial first moment of praise for Myk Habet's excellent edited volume, *Ecumenical Perspectives on the Filioque for the 21st Century* that its array of thinkers and essays make the *filioque* controversy quite readable and even interesting. Perhaps even more stunning is the fact that, despite the variety of perspectives and traditions on offer here—ranging from Reformed, to Catholic, Orthodox, Free Church, Pentecostal, and others—there is a sort of unity and even clarity among its many parts. Few topics are quite so eager and ready to stumble over themselves and their own technicality and tradition as the *filioque*, but each author has taken pains to be as clear as possible what the terms and differences are, and what is at stake.

Moreover, and unexpectedly, the *filioque* here provides readers an opportunity to see something like real progress in a theological controversy. Noting its own precedents, this volume opens by recounting what Myk Habets calls "small but significant" steps toward the removal of the *filioque* as an obstacle (xiv). This is hesitant language, of course, as "removal of obstacles" is not the same as unity of thought and practice. Nonetheless, these steps include the World Council of Churches' study, *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy* published in 1981, and many other documents such as, "The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Spirit" in 1995, and another statement issued in 2003 by the North American Orthodox-Catholic Consultation.

There are also several items of what appear to be material and thematic agreement amongst the many esteemed authors contributing to this volume. For example, while Augustine and the Third Council of Toledo are typically cited as instigating the *filioque*, recent research has shown that the *filioque* was not a systematic point of emphasis in the West until the Carolingian Renaissance (indeed the phrase *a Patre filioque procedit* does not even appear in Augustine's corpus), where the Carolingians "made the *filioque* a cornerstone of their anti-Arian rhetoric" (11). Pope Leo III even commanded the Franks to remove the *filioque,* as he "could not prefer himself to the fathers and alter the ancient creed." Only with the growing power of the Ottonian dynasty was the *filioque* forced upon the Pope, "forever joining the legitimacy of the addition to the pope's right to decide the faith of the universal church" (12). On the other hand, it certainly does appear that Eastern animosity to the *filioque*—legitimate theological points aside—was born as much from lack of easy access to the Patristic witness on the matter, as it was from its partisan insertion into the creed (16 n.46).

Other broader points of agreement (helpfully summarized by David Guretzki's chapter) include: a growing irenicism on all sides, a growing awareness of the

need for scholarly investigation, and a movement from seeing this as a piece of irrevocable and fundamental dogma to one of differing interpretations (for more, cf. 40-61). Materially, the latter (from dogma to interpretation) is justified by increasing clarity on just what is at stake in the formulations of East and West. It is now broadly agreed on all sides, for example, that the West did not intend to include two *archai* in the Godhead by saying the Spirit also proceeds from the son (46, 93), and indeed that Augustine and Aquinas (for example) did not break with the East in considering the Father as *arche.*

There is also clarity in the discussion throughout this volume regarding the fact that the Latin *procedit* is an incredibly misleading translation of the Greek *ekporeusis*. Just as the language barrier created confusion in shifting from *hypostasis* to the Latin *substantia*, so too does the highly specified meaning of *ekporeusis* get lost in the broader Latin of *procedit*, creating inordinate puzzlement and raising the polemical stakes (and poor theology student's blood pressures) uneccessarily. This is not just a recent discovery. Many of the Fathers like Maximus the Confessor were quite aware of this linguistic distinction, and as such would *not* refute the *filioque*, understanding the Latins did not imply more than one principle of origin (21, 51, 86). As Robert Jenson thus concludes, without wanting to gloss the real and actually abiding differences, there is a sense in which "East and West have worked within very different conceptual frameworks and that when this is reckoned with, neither side needs to deny what the other affirms, or affirm what the other denies" (160; cf. 20; 48; 91-92).

That said, however, there is also what appears to be an emerging agreement (though, not consensus) amongst many authors in this volume regarding some of the theological complaints of the East against the *filioque*. As one example, several of the authors (Westerners, no less), take Photius' theological criticism of the *filioque* seriously, and deal with it accordingly. If we are to stick with talking about relations of origin as the sole ground for distinction in the Trinity (and, as we will turn to in a moment, this is a big if for several of the contributors), taking Brannon Ellis' opinion as representative: "when the power of breathing the Spirit in God is what the Son receives *as God* from the Father *as God*, then advocates of the *filioque* are still speaking of the Spirit's origination, but no longer on the level of personal predication" (94; cf. Jenson on 163; and McDowell on 171).

And what of the constructive proposals on offer here? These are as various as the number of essays submitted, nonetheless a few patterns do emerge. For example, though many of the authors take Photius' criticism seriously, as

Kathryn Tanner notes Photius is certainly not the final word, for with his solution that the Spirit only proceeds from the Son in the economy of salvation, "it is . . . not clear from the Eastern (Photinian) view what the [immanent Trinitarian] relations, if any, are between Son and Spirit" (207).

As such, in his fascinating historical essay, Theodoros Alexopolous examines the Eastern conceptual history of the eternal *manifestation* or *shining forth* (*eklampei*) of the Spirit through the Son (65-87). He traces this concept from Athanasius, the Cappadocians, through Maximus Confessor and John Damascene, ultimately to two lesser known theologians: Nikephoros Blemmydes and Gregory of Cyprus. What we have here is an acceptance of the Photian criticism of the *filioque*, and so an attempt to avoid the idea that the Holy Spirit is somehow constituted hypostatically by the Son as well as the Father. And yet, going beyond Photius, both Blemmydes and Gregory of Cyprus want to affirm that the sending of the Spirit by the Son in the economy has some foothold in the eternal divine life itself. Thus in the eternal life of the Trinity the Holy Spirit is not hypostatically constituted by the Son, proceeding (*ekporeusis*) from the Father alone; yet He eternally shines forth God's glory *through* the Son (eklampei) (e.g. 78).

Others through the volume do not follow this specific path, but rather invoke a more generous application of *perichoresis* to the eternal *taxis* or order of the Trinitarian relations, in order to account for sensibilities from both cardinal directions. At this point, eye-rolling might be expected. *Perichoresis* has of late reached near-infomercial levels of optimism as a catch-all spackle for Trinitarian home-improvement. But here such skepticism would be unjustified, as it is used with interesting variety and nuance. Thomas Weinandy critiques in its entirety what he terms "Trinitarian sequentialism" (189), and puts forward a concise version of the thesis he previously argued in his book *The Father's Spirit of Sonship:* "The Spirit (of love) proceeds from the father simultaneously to his begetting of the Son. The Spirit does so as the one in whom the Father loving begets his Son, and in so doing the Spirit conforms (persons) the Father to be the *loving* Father of and for the Son he is begetting. Moreover, the Holy Spirit proceeds simultaneously from the Son, and in so doing conforms (persons) the Son to be the *loving* Son of and for the Father who begets Him" (193).

This is, as a formulation, cumbersome and brain twisting (and unlikely to invade the hymnals any time soon). But it does try to account for the Eastern critique while simultaneously keeping the instincts of the West's tradition of the Holy Spirit as the *vinculum caritatis,* binding Father and Son. Kathryn Tanner and Myk Habets likewise invoke *perichoresis*, with Tanner arguing "in sum, Son and Spirit come forth together from the father and return together in

mutually involving ways that bind one to the other" (203), while Habets wishes to emphasize that he is attempting to combine the best insights of the Western "subsistent relation" tradition with the Eastern focus on "*perichoresis*" (218).

In a similar vein, Brannon Ellis invokes John Calvin to ask "what if the age-old divergence between Eastern and Western formulations of the spiration of the Spirit, is due to a significant extent to teasing out variant implications of a shared commitment to a particular explanatory strategy for speaking of the manner of divine procession?" He in turn offers theologians the provocation: "this explanation of the ineffable relation between personal *taxis* and essential unity is precisely what a Calvinian perspective does not grant – and ostensibly on the tradition's own terms" because, according to Ellis, the essence is not communicated but equally possessed by the three: "simply put, to speak of the divine essence *itself* in a relative or comparative sense (as given or received among the persons) is just as inappropriate as making no personal distinctions between Father, Son and Spirit . . ." (90). As such Ellis wants to use Calvin as an inspiration to call both East and West "to deeper *self*-consistency in challenging modes of thought and speech that are in tension" with pro-Nicene Trinitarian grammar (99).

Robert Jenson in turn uses similar logic to critique the traditional limitation of distinction in the Trinity to one of origins (164): "a diagram of the Trinity's constituting relations would then show both active relations of the Triune origin . . . *and* active relations of the Triune goal" (165), while Paul Molnar highlights T. F. Torrance's insistence that the *monarchia* refers to the entire consubstantial Trinity and not just the Father, thereby circumventing the entire logic that created the opportunity for the problem of the *filioque* in the first place. Habets emphasizes this as well, closing the volume with such a Torrance-inspired suggestion (230).

Certainly the millennia-old question is not resolved here, but we have been given some fascinating food for thought. It is perhaps too trivial to mention what one wishes would have been added to such a rich volume, yet it was curious that without fail Maximus the Confessor was mentioned as a pivotal resource for future dialogue, and yet there was no specific chapter on Maximus, who receives heaps of praise but hardly any sustained analysis. In addition, Yves Congar's bold suggestion that the *filioque* be suppressed in the Western church is also mentioned several times but the broader issue—just what *is* one to do with the respective liturgies that have encoded the controversy and cemented themselves into the living memory of various ecclesia?—is likewise not given any attention.

These nitpicks aside, this is a remarkable volume not only in its clarity and

readability, but by also demonstrating how the *filioque* is related to the entire array of beliefs involved in what it is to be a Christian. Angels and pinheads have no place here—what each contributor has done, and done remarkably well, is to display that the controversies surrounding the *filioque* circulate around how the whole of the scriptural narrative itself is read, how we interpret its agents, and ultimately, how we are drawn into God's very life. This will no doubt remain a pivotal guidebook on the topic for years to come.

Derrick Peterson

THE CLAIM OF HUMANITY IN CHRIST:

Salvation and Sanctification in the Theology of T. F. and J. B. Torrance

Alexandra S. Radcliff

Princeton Monograph Series, Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016, 208pp.
[ISBN: 978-1-4982-3019-3: $25.00]

Salvation and sanctification are key words in all Christian theology. They have a particular resonance across the whole spectrum of evangelical Christianity, including the modern missionary movement which shaped the Torrance family. Dr. Alexandra Radcliff's elegantly structured and clearly written monograph, based on her St. Andrews thesis, is a comprehensive exploration of the significance of the theology of T. F. and J. B. Torrance for what is sometimes called "the doctrine of the Christian life."

Standing in the Reformed tradition, T. F. Torrance in particular was "sternly objective" (as John Webster writes about Barth). This reviewer remembers the strictures of both brothers in class on the dangers of subjectivism in both existentialist liberal and pietistic evangelical traditions. They were greatly aware that some evangelicals influenced by their Pietist roots could focus (as J. B. used to say) on "our experience of God" instead of on "the God whom we experience." But given the Torrances' focus on "the Triune God of grace," are there not implications to be drawn for a positive understanding of how we are changed by "the God whom we experience"? This is the question the book raises.

Dr. Radcliff devotes Part 1 to "The Triune God of Grace and Salvation," and the three chapters form a triadic structure: Father, Son, and Spirit. Here so many themes from the Torrances' trinitarian theology are laid out in comprehensive clarity. Chapter 1 on "The Father as a Covenant and not a Contract God" lays out a theme particularly emphasized by J. B. The title and the sub-title, "Filial over Federal," indicate that J. B.'s debate with Federal Calvinism is expounded here with familiar themes such as "Who" over "How," covenant not contract, and the obligations of grace in opposition to legalistic conditional grace. Universal atonement is distinguished from universalism and "logico-causal categories" criticized.

Chapter 2 develops the theme which T. F. used to say was the heart of his theology, "The Vicarious Humanity of the Son." The sub-title "Ontological over External" indicates how once again the debate is carried on with the tendency of much Western theology (and particularly part of the evangelical Reformed tradition) to reduce the doctrine of the atonement to external, forensic categories. It is not that the Torrances dismiss the forensic element (despite some claims that they do), but that the atonement is understood to be so much richer when Person and Work, incarnation and atonement, are considered in unity. The atonement must be considered in its prospective as well as retrospective aspect (as McLeod Campbell declared), and as not just "by Christ," but ontologically "in Christ." Attention is drawn to current New Testament scholarship which bears out the Torrances' understanding of πίστις Χριστου.

In the third chapter, "Drawn to Participate by the Holy Spirit," the subtitle, "Objective over Subjective," indicates how crucial this is for the thesis propounded by the whole book. But it is here that Dr. Radcliff develops her perspective from the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition as she addresses the question whether the strongly Christocentric theology of the Torrances leads to a neglect of the Spirit, as some have alleged. She rejects that criticism in view of the self-effacing character of the Holy Spirit, but she does detect a slight differentiation in the brothers. T. F., devoting himself to study and publication, tends to focus more on the *noetic* aspect, that by the Spirit we come to recognize what is already ours in Christ; J. B., while in no way disagreeing with that, has more developed pastoral concern for the Holy Spirit as not only "the Spirit of truth" but also "the Spirit of adoption." Both draw on the Eastern concept of *theosis* as understood by George Florovsky in terms of communion with God.

But it is in the second part of the book, entitled "Sanctification and Human Participation," that Dr. Radcliff develops her perspective from the Pentecostal-Charismatic perspective, also taking the Wesleyan tradition into account. She notes that T. F. affirms both sides of the Patristic formula: "From the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, and in the Spirit, through the Son to the Father" (112). If the first part of her book explores the first side, the God-humanward movement, the second explores the human-Godward movement. But while the structure of the chapters in the first part of the book is trinitarian, all three chapter titles in the second part focus on Christ: Chapter 4, "Christ is Our Holiness," Chapter 5, "Growing Up into Christ," and Chapter 6, "Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus." It is in the subtitles that we see a reverse movement, Chapter 4 sharing the sub-title "Objective over Subjective" with Chapter 3; Chapter 5 sharing the sub-title, "Ontological over External" with Chapter 2, and Chapter 6 sharing the sub-title,

"Filial over Federal" with Chapter 1.

Chapter 4 affirms the Torrances' focus, "Christ is Our Holiness." Their emphasis was on the objective sanctification of our humanity achieved by Christ, but according to Dr. Radcliff, they said little about how this is subjectively realized in us. In fact, however, the focus on objective sanctification in Christ provides the necessary basis for the fuller subjective realization of sanctification in us without "throwing us back on ourselves." Some "well-meaning" evangelical Protestant traditions tend to make our sanctification into an "external anthropocentric endeavour," and therefore she agrees with them that more needs to be said about how our sanctification is not achieved by our self-consecration or self-discipline, but by the freedom of the Spirit which is ours in Christ.

Chapter 5 addresses this need to say more. The eschatological reserve created by Christ's ascension means that "sinfulness is a continuing presence." There is an eschatological tension between the hidden and the manifest, and this has implications for the outworking of our sanctification. This is not an external process of becoming progressively more holy by our own efforts. We have been made completely holy in Christ, and the progression of time only serves the unveiling of this definitive reality. This does not deny human activity but puts it in its proper place. There is therefore an appropriate "confidence in Christ," and Romans 7 cannot be regarded (as in the Puritan tradition) as the normative Christian life. At this point Dr. Radcliff ventures the criticism: "However, there is a general lack of discussion of this confidence by the Torrances in relation to the subjective outworking of sanctification" (159). While they focus on the priestly office of Christ, more might have been said about the "subjective outworking" by enlarging on Christ's kingly victory.

This line of thought is developed in Chapter 6, "Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus," where the subtitle takes up again the theme from Chapter 1, "Filial over Federal." Here the understanding of sin as *cor incurvatus in se* leads to an understanding of sanctification as *cor excurvatus ex se*. So repentance cannot be a matter of a self-examination in which we carefully enumerate our sins or of the self-discipline necessary to keep the law (as advocated, it is said, by James Packer and others in the Puritan tradition). It is rather a "renewing of the mind" as we centre our attention not on ourselves but on Christ. The outworking of our sanctification, already complete in Christ, comes about from the noetic process of knowing ourselves to be in him, and from the participatory relationship of dwelling in him. There seems to be a clear logic in this: if sin is essentially self-centeredness, then self-examination and self-improvement through self-discipline seem to be exacerbating the problem!

One wonders, however, if there is not a riddle at the heart of this matter. Undoubtedly Dr. Radcliff is correct that the Torrances are right that the priority should be given to grace over law, the indicatives over the imperatives, the filial over the federal, the objective over the subjective, and the ontological over the external. Occasionally, however, a question or hesitation appears. There is the question already mentioned whether more does not need to be said about "the subjective outworking of sanctification" (159). One might ask: should more not be said of the third use of the law? Did Calvin not give this its due weight, and is Book Three of the *Institutes* not all about the doctrine of the Christian life – faith, regeneration, repentance, penitence, self-denial, bearing the cross, and so on? In fact the Torrances' brother-in-law, R. S. Wallace, wrote the definitive work on this, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*. A Wesleyan would have to ask whether, while grace is prior to law, the recurrence of antinomianism does not require us to make sure that the law is given its true though subordinate place as *torah* (instruction). Is no practical guidance to be given in matters of the disciplines of Christian living? Of course, responses to those questions are appropriate. In the first place, the Torrances were in a specific context trying to correct imbalances toward subjectivism. But after all, they were also dogmatic theologians, and while practical or pastoral theology ought to arise out of dogmatics, the development of pastoral theology was not their particular remit.

What Dr. Radcliff has given us, however, is a splendid investigation of the important message the Torrances have for the spectrum of pietistic evangelical traditions in particular. "It is a dangerous thing to do," said P. T. Forsyth, "to work at your own holiness." Evangelical pietists of all stripes–Calvinists, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Charismatics –can all surely benefit from hearing that sanctification is not the result of working at our own sanctification. Do-it-yourself sanctification is an absurdity. Sanctification is rather the work of the Spirit in us so that our lives, our thoughts, our longings and desires, and our relationships are focused on the Christ who has already procured our sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit in his own incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension.

We are indebted to Dr. Radcliff for elucidating this aspect of the Torrances' theology. She has highlighted an area where their resolute Christocentric, Trinitarian focus can be of immense value to the church at large by countering the in-built tendency of fallen humanity to be subtly trapped in self-centered religion and a self-centered attempt at self-sanctification.

T. A. Noble

FLESH AND BLOOD: A Dogmatic Sketch Concerning the Fallen Nature View of Christ's Human Nature

Daniel J. Cameron

Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2016, 116pp.

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Dan Cameron is a member of the T. F. Torrance Theological Fellowship and a recent graduate with a Master of Arts in Systematic Theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (USA). *Flesh and Blood* is the published version of his Master's thesis. Cameron's object is to defend T. F. Torrance's doctrine of Christ's assumption of fallen human nature against Oliver Crisp's criticisms.[1]

Following a foreword by Myk Habets, Cameron prefaces his study with a three-level hierarchy for ranking doctrines: first, those which separate orthodoxy from heresy; secondly, those which separate orthodox churches (e.g., Reformed vs. Lutheran vs. Baptist); thirdly, those over which believers may disagree while yet worshiping together. In this third category he places the dispute over whether or not Christ assumed a fallen human nature. The guiding question of the book, though, is this: "while remaining orthodox can it be said that Christ assumed a fallen human nature in the incarnation?" (xviii) This way of putting the issue stands in some tension with Cameron's ranking of it among third-order adiaphora, since answering the question negatively implies that those who answer affirmatively do not remain orthodox. This tension indicates the twin commitments that animate Cameron's book: to orthodoxy and to peacemaking. The preface also outlines the flow of argument of the rest of the book.

Chapter One explains Cameron's rationale for selecting Torrance and Crisp as his primary representatives of the "fallenness" and "unfallenness" viewpoints, respectively. He points out that Crisp mounts a formidable argument that the fallenness view is incompatible with orthodoxy yet never references T. F. Torrance, one of the view's most articulate exponents. Cameron wishes to clarify Torrance's view and show whether it can withstand Crisp's objections. The rest of the chapter unfortunately bears witness to oversights in the editing process:

1 Oliver Crisp, "Did Christ Have a *Fallen* Human Nature?", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6.3 (2004): 270–288, reprinted in his *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

it repeats the preface's discussion of the threefold ranking of doctrines and once again outlines the book, but the outline here is incorrectly numbered (e.g., "Chapter 1" is really Chapter Two), and no reference is made to Chapter Five.

Chapter Two describes the significance that Torrance attributes to the Virgin Birth and the homoousion for understanding Christ. Against this backdrop of the union of person and work, divinity and humanity in Christ, Cameron proceeds to sketch two explanations given by Torrance of the Son's assumption of fallen human nature. The first explanation, which appears in Torrance's early Auburn lectures, is that Christ took on a nature subject to infirmity, satanic assault, and divine judgment but not to original sin. Drawing from Emil Brunner's teaching that original sin is located in one's personhood, the young Torrance stresses the Son's anhypostatic incarnation: because Christ assumes human nature but not a human person, he takes up that nature's fallenness but not that person's original sin. By contrast, the second explanation appears in Torrance's postdoctoral writings and affirms that Christ took on original sin and guilt in assuming a fallen human nature, but that from the moment of conception onward he healed that nature so that it was sinless. Cameron sees this second explanation as signaling Torrance's addition of enhypostasia to anhypostasia: the humanity assumed by Christ becomes "personalized" in his divine person so that humanity's depraved mind and will are sanctified by his uniting with and thinking and willing through them. While Cameron does not explicitly say so, this shift in Torrance's explanations depends on his breaking with Brunner and relocating original sin from human personhood to human nature.[2]

Chapter Three examines Crisp's critiques of the fallenness doctrine. First, advocates of fallenness are partly motivated by the desire to ensure that Christ's humanity is not alien to our own. Crisp, however, points out that the condition of fallenness is an accidental rather than essential property of human nature; therefore Christ need not be fallenly human to be fully human. Secondly, Crisp equates fallenness with possession of original sin. The Augustinian-Reformed concept of original sin consists of two aspects: the corrupt propensity to sin (concupiscence) and original guilt. Crisp himself finds the notion of original guilt logically questionable. Even in the absence of original guilt, though, a person whose nature bears concupiscence would be unacceptable to God, hence sinful. Crisp can see no escape from the conclusion that fallenness entails sinfulness

2 See E. Jerome Van Kuiken, *Christ's Humanity in Current and Ancient Controversy: Fallen or Not?* (London: T&T Clark, forthcoming), §§1.3.1 and 1.3.2. As noted by Dick O. Eugenio, *Communion with the Triune God: The Trinitarian Soteriology of T. F. Torrance* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 49n71, more investigation needs to be done into Torrance's hamartiology.

and so would disqualify a fallen-natured Christ from being the Savior. Thirdly, Crisp claims that another motive for asserting Christ's having a fallen nature is to render his temptations genuine by allowing that in his humanity, he could have sinned—although either his divine nature or the Holy Spirit restrained him from ever doing so. Yet this notion of divine restraint is functionally equivalent to the notion that Christ's human nature was impeccable, thus undermining the fallenness proponents' final rationale. Lastly, although Crisp denies that Christ's humanity was fallen (i.e., possessed of original sin), he grants that Christ experienced Fall-consequent physical and moral infirmities.

In Chapter Four, Cameron seeks to rebut Crisp's critiques. First, he follows Ian McFarland[3] by distinguishing between fallenness as a property of human nature and sinfulness as a property of human persons. This move vindicates Torrance's Auburn-era fallenness view but seems to leave his later view vulnerable. To resolve this problem, Cameron appeals to Christ's vicarious assumption of human nature: the fallen mind and volition exist as sinful in all merely human persons but exist as non-sinful in Christ due to his sanctifying assumption of them into the hypostatic union. Secondly, Cameron rejects Crisp's claim that fallenness advocates wish to assert Christ's peccability. Here Cameron cites Barth rather than Torrance to prove his point even though Torrance's Auburn lectures contain a clear affirmation of non posse peccare.[4] Thirdly, Cameron masterfully replies to Crisp's objection that Christ may be fully human apart from assuming a fallen human nature: the point of the Incarnation is not simply to become human per se but to redeem fallen humanity; in order to make atonement (as opposed to a mere metaphysical experiment) the assumption of fallen human nature is necessary. Fourthly, the protest that assuming such a nature would defile the Savior's holiness likewise misses the soterio-logic of the Incarnation. Christ does not leave the nature which he assumes in its corrupt state; instead, he hallows it from the first moment of its assumption. Having defused Crisp's critiques, Cameron very briefly sketches the fallenness view's exegetical basis in 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14 and 4:15; and John 1:14. This section is too cursory to convince an unfallenness proponent but does demonstrate that the fallenness view enjoys some *prima facie* biblical support. The chapter's final section presents Cameron's conclusion that the fallenness view falls within the

3 Ian A. McFarland, "Fallen or Unfallen? Christ's Human Nature and the Ontology of Human Sinfulness", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 10.4 (2008): 399–415, reprinted in his *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

4 Thomas F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Jesus Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 125–129.

bounds of orthodoxy. In keeping with his concern for peacemaking, he also urges both sides in the debate to focus on their significant points of agreement.

Leaning hard on Myk Habets' 2015 address to the T. F. Torrance Theological Fellowship,[5] Chapter Five looks to Spirit Christology for assistance in understanding Christ's assumption of fallen human nature. Cameron documents that Torrance describes Jesus' life of sanctifying the flesh as occurring in the power of the Spirit, but he finds Torrance lacking a full-orbed Spirit Christology. Here Cameron echoes Habets in calling for constructive work in this area. Cameron also adopts Habets' appeal to the perichoretic unity underlying the Trinity's works ad extra in order to deflect Oliver Crisp's criticism that Spirit Christology divides the divine Son from his assumed humanity. Following Chapter Five is an appended bibliography of Torrance's books.

Flesh and Blood is a promising theological student's summary and defense of Torrance's doctrine of Christ's assumption of fallen human nature. Its brevity, clarity, and personal touches commend it as a supplemental textbook, book-study resource, or theological "tract" for those who are just becoming acquainted with Torrance's thought and who may wrestle, as Cameron did, with the notion of Christ's fallen humanity. As C. S. Lewis somewhere observes, often a struggling student gains the most real help on a hard subject from a fellow student who has not advanced too far to sympathize.

E. Jerome Van Kuiken

5 Published as Myk Habets, "The Fallen Humanity of Christ: A Pneumatological Clarification of the Theology of Thomas F. Torrance", *Participatio* 5 (2015): 18–44.

SURVIVING THE UNTHINKABLE: Choosing to Live after Someone You Love Chooses to Die

Don J. Payne

Eugene, OR: Resource Publications
Wipf and Stock Publishers, 72pp.
[ISBN:978-1-4982-3063-6] $10.00 (USD)

An interesting phenomenon has appeared on the internet called "Postsecret." On this website, contributors send in postcards anonymously writing down personal secrets, from the funny ("I'm a girlie-girl who likes to play with power tools . . .") to the tragic ("My husband was arrested by the FBI and my family thinks he's away at a treatment facility"). We all have secrets. Some of them we would never dare tell another person. But some secrets lead to the most ultimate of actions: taking one's own life. How does one respond, moreover, when he or she is a member of one's own family? That is the question of this very personal book by Don J. Payne, Associate Professor of Theology and Christian Formation at Denver Seminary, and a member of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship.

His one basic goal, states Dr. Payne, is "to offer a bit of strength and encouragement to others who are forced to deal with a suicide" (xviii), presented in three parts: 1) giving voice to the unpredictable emotions involved, 2) offering reflections based on the Christian faith, and 3) attempting to point to where hope can be found.

This is not an area in which expertise can readily be appealed to or a club that one wants to join, Payne wryly comments. If it is a club, it is a club of "survivors," for the suicidee leaves behind other victims than himself: his family and his friends. Much of the book rightly deals with this connectedness that we have to one another, a connectedness that we often take for granted (one cannot but help think of "onto-relations" in Torrance's thought).

The individual is left with an intensity in the ordinary - the places where one was when one heard the news become intensified - where ordinary human acts become sacramental, such as drinking a warm cup of coffee. The ordinariness of the relationship between brothers now becomes extremely extraordinary when

that other brother is no longer around. We have to redefine ourselves, Payne contends, without that other.

Yet there is a place for hope and gratitude because of the Christian faith, Payne writes. As a Christian one can find "meaning and severity" strangely together in the same place (xx). There is no finding "meaning" in the tragic event itself. It is difficult enough to understand the offender as "both victim and perpetrator" (p. 5). This is one of the most refreshing aspects of Don Payne's book. It is extremely, almost disarmingly, honest in facing what is involved in a suicide of a family member. And, therefore, he takes the process of Christian forgiveness very seriously and not lightly. Don Payne's study under Ray Anderson, who is notable for his work in integrating T. F. Torrance's theology with ministry, is very evident here and throughout the book.

T. F. Torrance wrote much about Christ taking on fallen nature, in order that the entirety of our humanity might be healed. This includes our "secret" places that can fester and grow malignant, providing the basis for the ultimate act of despair. Perhaps it is a judgment upon the church that a website such as "Postsecret" is needed for people to express the desperation of their darkest secrets. Instead, the church should be a place of transparency, as difficult as that is for pastors and theologians alike, as Don Payne points out, where people can "confess your sins to one another" (James 5:16) and pray together to the One who "always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25), Christ, our High Priest. As a part of that reality, Don Payne's book will be very useful as a gift to anyone who is going through such a loss and is seeking to find hope and gratitude.

Christian D. Kettler

THE UNASSUMED IS THE UNHEALED:

The Humanity of Christ in the Theology of T. F. Torrance

Kevin Chiarot

Pickwick: Eugene, OR, 2013, 235pp.

This book is an exploration and critique of T. F. Torrance's understanding of the doctrine of Christ's assumption of fallen humanity. In this book, a revised Ph.D. dissertation, Kevin Chiarot offers a welcome contribution to the growing body of secondary literature on Torrance. He offers a good and clear summary and overview of the role of Christ's humanity in Torrance's theology, helpfully articulating some of the roots of Torrance's theological conceptions in this area. In the book Chiarot argues that Christ's assumption of fallen humanity drives Torrance's Christology and therein his greater theology, but that it ultimately collapses because Torrance needs forensic categories to do what he is trying to do, and he only works with ontological categories. Chiarot's overall argument, however, falls short in that he attempts to place Torrance in federal categories which are entirely at odds with Torrance's theology, failing to understand Torrance on his own terms.

Chiarot summarizes his attempt as twofold: "to demonstrate the pervasive role of the non-assumptus" (p. 225) and "to criticize Torrance's theology of the non-assumptus" (p. 226). Chiarot succeeds in his first attempt in that he articulates well the importance of the non-assumptus for Torrance's Christology. The primary strength of this book is its excellent overview of the full scope of Torrance's understanding of the role of the humanity of Christ in theology.

In the introduction (p. 1–22), Chiarot clearly situates Torrance in general and Torrance's understanding of Christ's assumption of fallen humanity in particular in the "genealogy" (p. 10) of the Nicene Fathers (particularly Gregory Nazianzen), the Reformation (particularly John Calvin), the Scottish tradition (particularly Edward Irving, John McLeod Campbell, and H. R. Mackintosh), and Karl Barth. At least this prominent stream of the theological tradition has affirmed Christ's assumption of fallen humanity, Chiarot notes for Torrance, even though the assumptus is not the normative belief in Christian history.

Throughout the introduction, and this is drawn out throughout the rest of the book, Chiarot suggests that Torrance is offering a creative reading of the

theological tradition (e.g. see p. 6: "the correctness of his historical reading will not concern us").

In chapter 2 (p. 23–86) Chiarot highlights and explicates the important role that Israel plays in Torrance's Christology, and therein in his greater dogmatic theology. In this chapter Chiarot contributes a stellar summary of Torrance's theological view of Israel to contemporary Torrance scholarship. Torrance's understanding of Israel is a central aspect of his theology, yet Torrance's discussion of this element of dogmatics is spread throughout his great corpus of literature, rather than being treated in full-length monographs such as he does with the doctrine of the Trinity, save for portions of *The Mediation of Christ*. Chiarot successfully synthesizes Torrance's views on Israel into one chapter and as such offers an excellent source for anyone wishing a succinct statement of Torrance's understanding of the role of Israel in the Christological narrative of salvation.

In chapters 3 (p. 87–102), 4 (p. 87–102), and 5 (p. 103–164), Chiarot examines Torrance's conception of the union between God and man in Christ, emphasizing (as would be expected) the role of Christ's assumption of fallen humanity. In chapter 3, Chiarot articulates Torrance's understanding of the incarnation and the virgin birth of Christ. In chapter 4, Chiarot examines Torrance's use of the Nicene doctrine of *homoousion* as well as the patristic doctrine of the *hypostatic union.* In chapter 5, Chiarot examines Torrance's view of the vicarious humanity of Christ. These chapters offer helpful summaries and as such will serve those unfamiliar with Torrance wishing for a concise overview. Chapter 5 in particular synthesizes Torrance's conception of the vicarious humanity of Christ, drawing out the various ways in which Torrance understands Christ to represent humanity vicariously.

Chapter 6 (p. 204–223) examines Torrance's doctrine of the atonement and the conclusion (p. 224–226) offers a 3-page summary of the arguments and critiques from the book. As stated, the real strength of the book is its succinct synthesis and summary of Torrance's understanding of the role of the humanity of Christ in dogmatic theology. Chiarot's arsenal of sources from the Torrancian corpus is impressive and he draws upon works from the very beginning of Torrance's career through to secondary literature written only recently.

Throughout the book Chiarot aims to "demonstrate the pervasive role of the non-assumptus" (p. 225), and whilst he certainly articulates the content of Torrance's view clearly, he fails to argue successfully that Christ's assumption of fallen humanity is central to Torrance, and so he misses the mark somewhat on this goal. While clearly important for Torrance, surely Torrance would say that the lynchpin of theology is the Nicene *homoousion,* not the non-assumptus

(e.g. Torrance says the *homoousion* is "the organic pattern integrating all the doctrines of the Christian faith" in *Theology in Reconciliation*, 264). Chiarot engages Torrance's use of the Nicene *homoousion* but he places in the context of the non-assumptus, rather than the other way around, which is how Torrance places it.

What is also disappointing is that Chiarot attempts to place Torrance in western, forensic, and Westminster categories and critiques Torrance for not fitting these categories. This is not to suggest that Chiarot's argument here is by necessity invalid, but in order to critique Torrance on these grounds, Chiarot needs to articulate the validity of the western, forensic, and Westminster understanding of the atonement, which simply seems to be assumed in the background of the book. Rather than stating this argument outright, Chiarot argues that Torrance's doctrine of Christ's assumption of fallen humanity collapses in upon itself and "it is not at all clear that the non-assumptus, as narrated by Torrance, can be salvaged" if not put in forensic categories (p. 226). The very nature of this argument is unfair to Torrance because Chiarot fails to engage Torrance in the Reformation and Greek Patristic categories Torrance is using, instead engaging Torrance in Westminster Calvinist categories.

For example, in his discussion of Torrance's doctrine of the atonement in chapter 6, Chiarot engages Torrance only on the classic Reformed concepts Torrance uses: the passive/active obedience of Christ and the limited/unlimited extent of the atonement. These are certainly categories that Torrance uses, and as Chiarot notes Torrance takes these classic Reformed formulations and reshapes them in a Torrancian fashion, however a glaring omission from this discussion of Torrance's discussion of the atonement is the Greek Patristic doctrine of *theosis*. Without the Greek Patristic *theosis*, the Reformed doctrines above do not make sense for Torrance (and vice versa). Torrance's doctrine of the atonement and his doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ, understood in terms of *theosis* (which is how Torrance means them to be understood) rather than in terms of substitutionary atonement (which is seemingly how Chiarot understands Torrance), draws out Torrance's emphases in atonement such as that immediately upon assuming fallen humanity, Christ begins to sanctify, heal, and redeem it. This in turn clarifies one of the major problems Chiarot has with Torrance, namely that for Torrance it seems Christ himself is in need of saving (Chiarot puts this in terms of Christ having the same redeemed sub-eschatological humanity as the rest of humanity).

Another notable example of this issue is Chiarot's focus upon the problem of the will of Christ. A major critique in chapter 5 is that by assuming fallen

humanity, Christ must have assumed a fallen will, and therefore must have been tempted to sin in the same way the rest of humanity is tempted to sin (Chiarot concludes that this does not seem to be the case in the Bible). This emphasis upon the noetic effects of the fall sees Chiarot failing to engage Torrance on Torrance's terms. To be sure, Torrance does discuss the role of the will in Christ's assumption of fallen humanity, but this is placed under the auspices of Christ's assumption of the *whole* man (to use Athanasius' language, as Torrance does). The very title of the book, taken from one of Torrance's favorite patristics quotations, comes from Gregory Nazianzen's *Letter 101: To Cledonius the Priest*, "the unassumed is the unhealed." It is impossible to understand Torrance's understanding of *fallen* humanity without understanding the Greek Patristic conception of *fallenness*. In short, the Greek Fathers work more in ontological categories of fallenness ("mortality") and the West traditionally works with forensic/legal categories of fallenness ("guilt"). Chiarot seems to assume Torrance is working with the latter, when it is necessary to at least engage Torrance's use of Gregory and the other Greek Fathers on the Greek Patristic terms of ontological, rather than forensic, fallenness in order to understand what Torrance is doing.

In conclusion, *The Unassumed is the Unhealed* offers succinct and clear summaries of the different elements of Torrance's doctrine of Christ's assumption of fallen humanity, but it fails to argue successfully that Torrance's view is faulty. The crux of Chiarot's argument is that Torrance's ontological categories fail to successfully articulate Christ's fallen humanity, and therefore forensic categories are needed. This may be so, but the canon that Chiarot is using is the forensic categories of Westminster Calvinism and Chiarot does not clearly articulate why this barometer is a better one than Torrance's ontological categories. Ultimately, Chiarot fails to engage Torrance on Torrance's own Greek Patristic and Reformed synthesis on its own terms, and thus fails to engage Torrance's work successfully.

Jason R. Radcliff

THE EUCHARIST AND RENEWAL IN THE CHURCH

Very Rev. Dr. Angus Morrison
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We are glad to include below an address (without full annotation) given by a former Moderator of the Church of Scotland General Assembly, to a Conference on T. F. Torrance's theology at the Edinburgh University Outdoor Centre on Loch Tay in Scotland on 3rd November 2016.

> The eucharist is . . . at once bound to history and related to the advent of Christ at the end of history. It reaches into the past, to the death of Christ, and sets it in the present as reality operative here and now in the church. On the other hand, the eucharist reaches out beyond the present into the future and becomes the means whereby the church in the present is brought under the power of the advent of Christ. The eucharist thus belongs to the very nature of the church, rooting and grounding it in the historical Christ and his saving acts, and also bringing to the church its own ultimate reality from beyond history . . . It is because the church receives its being ever anew, through the eucharist, as the new creation which is yet to be revealed at the Parousia, that it lives in dynamic tension here and now on the very frontiers of eternity.
>
> Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, pp. 419-20

> In the Eucharist we are at the centre of the world: we are where Christ, the Son, gives his life to his Father in the Spirit. And in the Eucharist we are at the end of the world: we are seeing how the world's calling is fulfilled in advance; we are seeing ourselves and our world as they really are, contemplating them in the depths of God, finding their meaning in relation to God. And the job of a Christian is constantly trying to dig down to that level of reality, and to allow gratitude, repentance and transformation to well up from that point. 'With you is the fountain of life', says the psalm; and it is that fountain that we drink from in Holy Communion.
>
> Rowan Williams, *Being Christian*, p. 59

> Dearest indeed, who are intoxicated with love. Intoxicated indeed, who deserve to be present at the wedding feast of the Lord, eating and drinking at his table in his kingdom, when He takes his Church to him in glory, without blemish or wrinkle or any defect. Then will he intoxicate his dearest ones with the torrent of his delight, for in the most passionate and most chaste embrace of Bridegroom and Bride, the rush of the river that makes glad the city of God. I think this is no other than what the Son of God, who waits on us as he goes, promised . . . Here is fullness without disgust, insatiable curiosity that is not restless, and eternal and endless desire that knows no lack, and last, that sober intoxication that does not come from drinking too much, that is no reeking of wine but a burning for God.
>
> Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

Let me say, first of all, how delighted and honoured I am to be here and how much I have been enjoying our time together. Regarding my own modest offering, I should say something by way of preamble.

When I hung up my Moderatorial shoes in May, I fondly imagined I would have lots of spare time to devote to interesting "extra-curricular" pursuits – theological and otherwise. Alas, I had not reckoned with the sheer volume of demands on the time and attention of a recently demobbed Moderator. I have, for example, already spoken at an event this week, and I have another to attend on Saturday. That I *am* here is due to three factors: the persuasive powers of my – our – esteemed and distinguished friend and Retreat leader, Robert Walker, and my huge admiration for the renowned theologian after whom this Retreat is named. I cherish enduring gratitude to Professor Torrance for personal support and encouragement at a particularly challenging stage on my journey. Professor Torrance was, as most of you know, a highly distinguished predecessor as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. One of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, his shoes I do not feel worthy to polish. A third reason is the real pleasure and nourishment in fellowship I found in my all-too-brief time at the Retreat in June of last year, shortly after taking up office. The moving time of prayer we then shared, was a source of abiding encouragement throughout my year.

It is a blessing to be here. In the circumstances, what I have to offer, at best, are some notes – rather extended notes as, of course, you'd expect from a *Gaidheal* – reflective of my own reading and thinking, *towards* (= not there yet) a fresh view of the significance of the Eucharist, in the context of the church's

renewal for mission.

I Introduction – a Difficult Legacy

Eucharist and Renewal in the Church – the title I was given – invites reflection on the ways in which our understanding and practice of the Lord's Supper may further renewal, on both individual and corporate levels, in the contemporary Church. Reflection along these lines is immediately beset by, at least, two major problems.

First, there is the extraordinary and sad fact that a constituent element of Christian worship, clearly intended to be a focus of our unity and fellowship as disciples of Jesus, has proved over the centuries to be the cause of some of our deepest divisions as Christians.

Then, second, we have to reckon with the sheer complexity of the Eucharistic theologies that have been elaborated in our diverse traditions, across the centuries.

All of this could lead to gloomy thoughts about the possibility of the Eucharist contributing anything to renewal in the church in our time. Such a conclusion, however, would be mistaken. While we have a long way to go, there are real signs of hope, as we see in our time increasing convergence, across our traditions, in respect of Eucharistic understanding and practice.

One of the most important contributions of the particular reformed tradition represented by Professor Torrance, with its *semper reformanda* watchword, must be to remind us, and other ecclesiastical traditions, of the constant need to re-examine all that is most hoary and unchallenged in our inheritance, in light of our foundational documents.

A Painful History

As I said, it is a sad fact of Church history that a rite, or ordinance, which was intended to be a focal point of unity among Christian people, has rather occasioned the most bitter and divisive, and continuing, quarrels. Of the various terms we use to describe this sacrament, as Thiselton says, "The three terms 'Eucharist,' 'Holy Communion' and 'Lord's Supper' can all be defended from biblical usage." As he indicates, "the Greek *eucharistēsas* means 'having given thanks' in 1 Corinthians 11:24; 'Communion' reflects *koinōnia*, 'sharing in' the blood of Christ, in 1 Corinthians 10:16; and the 'Lord's supper' is Paul's term for the rite in 1 Corinthians 11:20 (Gk. *kuriakon deipnon*, probably the main meal off the

day regardless of chronological timing)." Thiselton adds that "'Mass' may have become, or is becoming, a little dated, since it reflects a popularization of the last words of the Latin rite."[1]

Too often, however, even the terms we use to speak of the sacrament are laden with freight that is either acceptable or unacceptable, depending on its perceived associations. In my own distinctive Presbyterian background, I was early conditioned to regard with theological suspicion any person or denomination which used the term "Eucharist" for the "Lord's Supper." Holy Communion was marginally less doubtful. You'll appreciate that I've come a considerable way, when I am happy to use the preferred ecumenical term in this context.

The Eucharistic meal (we'll return to that latter term) separated Catholics and 16th century Reformers. Within the Protestant movement itself, widely differing views are held by the Lutheran, Free and Reformed Churches. In Wainwright's words, the "very centrality of the Eucharist to the church has made of it both the sign of unity among Christians and yet also a focus of the divisions that have arisen among them."

Such debates have been, of course, wide ranging, with differences in understanding and practice, and are "often symptomatic of other differences in doctrine and life that have arisen among them."[2]

We are all familiar – maybe too familiar – with the hotly debated issues, and we shall return to some of them: In what way exactly is Jesus present in the bread and wine? What benefit comes to those who partake? Who can preside or officiate at communion? How frequently should the Supper be celebrated? Who may fittingly participate? And so on.

As one example, we may recall the heated "Supper strife" between Luther and Zwingli, and their famous meeting at Marburg in 1529. There was vigorous debate over the meaning of the copula "is" in 1 Corinthians 11:24 ("This *is* my body"). Luther (if a certain tradition is to be believed), used his finger, dipped in the froth of his German ale, to write on the table between the two of them, *Hoc est corpus meum*, ("This is my body"), and would repeatedly point to the table and the foaming *est* ("is"), in countering Zwingli's memorialist arguments. I assume Luther would have had to reinforce the letters with each new tankard of beer. Sadly, he and Zwingli came to no agreement.

Looking back over Christian history, it is quite extraordinary how a relatively

1 Anthony C. Thiselton, *Systematic Theology* (London: SPCK, 2015), 330-1.

2 Geoffrey Wainwright, "Eucharist," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, eds, Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Prior (Oxford University Press, 2000), 215.

few clear references to the Supper in the New Testament have generated such a vast amount of varied theological superstructure. If you wish to absorb some sense of how enormous and varied that superstructure is, Boersma and Levering's tome, published earlier last year, is a good place to begin. I guarantee, however, it will leave you gasping at times for some clear, unpolluted Tayside air.[3]

Hopeful Signs

In terms of more recent ecumenical discussion, across various ecclesiastical fronts, it is encouraging to witness some significant progress towards (that word again) a resolution of the sad and shameful divisions occasioned by the Supper. As Wainwright says, "It has been possible to compose a theological account of the Eucharist that finds broad support, even while acknowledging that some points of contention remain only partially settled and so still prevent complete mutual acceptance among the churches."[4]

It should be noted that one of the most significant of recent ecumenical documents is the 1982 World Council of Churches' ground-breaking *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.[5] As in the case of baptism, *BEM* sets out the many dimensions of the Eucharist: "thanksgiving to the Father, anamnesis or memorial of Christ, invocation of the Spirit, communion of the faithful, and meal of the kingdom."[6]

As Kärkkäinnen remarks, it is undoubtedly a mark of the wisdom of *BEM* that it "does not engage the theological controversies such as how to define Christ's presence but rather concentrates on what Christians may be able to affirm together."[7]

Worthy of mention also is the agreed statement by the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), otherwise known as the "Windsor Statement."[8] Anglicans and Catholics here agree that "Christ's redeeming

3 Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

4 Wainwright (2000), 215.

5 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

6 See "Eucharist" in *BEM,* pp. 5-26. Quoted by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Eschatology," in eds Kelly M. Kapic & Bruce L. McCormack, *Mapping Modern Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 367.

7 Ibid.

8 Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), *Agreed Statement* (London: Anglican Consultative Council; Rome: Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 1971).

death and resurrection took place once for all in history . . . one, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world."[9] "No repetition" of it is possible, "although in the Communion there is indeed a 'making effective of an event in the past.'"[10] Thiselton points to the regrettable fact that "there appears to remain some inconsistency in Roman views; Vatican II still adheres to Aquinas's doctrine of transubstantiation."[11] The nature of the Eucharistic supper, as we shall see, in fact requires a replacing of all versions of "substance" ontology with an authentic "relational" ontology. I have no intention, however, of taking a philosophical route in this paper, as you'll no doubt be pleased to know.

In light of the long, contentious history of the Eucharist, it is not surprising that some contemporary churches, such as the Salvation Army, have dispensed with the Eucharist altogether. It seems, on the face of it, a sensible solution. Despite my holding the Salvation Army, within whose communion I have good friends, in the highest admiration, what has been given to us in the Eucharist – and its potential for renewal in the church – is just too precious and wonderful a gift to take such a course.

II The Sacrament of New Creation

What, then, is the Eucharist all about? In my view, the Australian New Testament scholar Michael Bird has expressed it rather well: "The meaning of Eucharist is ultimately anchored in a story, in fact, *the story*. It is a snap shot of the grand narrative about God, Creation, the Fall, Israel, the Exile, the Messiah, the Church, and the Consummation. Eucharist is ultimately a microcosm of our theology, as what we think about gospel, salvation, and community, impacts our theology of the Eucharist. The bread and wine tell a story about God, redemption, Jesus, and salvation… The Eucharist is essentially *remembering* Jesus' death, *reinscribing* the story of Jesus' passion with paschal imagery, *restating* the promises of the new covenant, *rehearsing* the victory of Jesus over sin and death, and *refocusing* our attention toward the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus."[12]

9 Ibid., 2:5.

10 Ibid. See Thiselton (2015), 333.

11 Ibid.

12 Michael Bird, "A Feast of Meanings: Theology of the Eucharist (Part I)," *Euangelion* 30th July 2011. http://www.patheos.com/blogs/euangelion/2011/07/a-feast-of-meanings-theology-of-the-eucharist-part-1/.

Living in the Light of the Church's Final Destination

Tom Wright has written, "The question for us must be: how can we, today, get in on this story? How can we understand this remarkable gift of God and use it properly? How can we make the best of it?"[13]

A good deal of what I want to share with you takes its cue from Wright's ecclesiology and sacramentology, partly because I believe it to be essentially true to the scriptural witness, and partly because I believe it to be highly suggestive in reflecting on the place of the Eucharist in the renewal of the church today. Stephen Kuhrt has skilfully summarised Wright's theology and for the purposes of this paper I shall follow his analysis.[14]

Wright discerns in the New Testament a deep and rich ecclesiology and argues "that allegiance to the visible, historical Church is part of allegiance to the gospel itself. Paying attention to both the story of Israel and God's purpose for the world are the vital steps to appreciating this."[15] For Wright, the gospel or good news at core refers to "the royal proclamation that in and through Jesus, declared by his resurrection to be Messiah and Lord, YHWH the God of Israel has become King and begun his process of putting his world right . . . Through the coming of God's Spirit everyone, without restriction, is summoned to be part of this renewed world that he is remaking."[16] Every aspect of "building for the kingdom," *done in the name of Jesus*, whether evangelism, the seeking of social justice and care for the environment and creation, is equally "gospel work."[17]

In this perspective the calling of the people of God can be understood as "to live in the light of Easter by seeking to anticipate in the present as much as possible of [the] future resurrection life."[18] The Church's role is to proclaim that Jesus is Lord and "it does this through its words and deeds imagining and embodying the reality of the 'new creation' that Jesus Christ has come to bring."[19]

The Church's worship and mission can therefore only be properly understood in light of its final destination. "Worship" is fundamentally about "the Church being led by the Spirit to live in ways that anticipate the reality of God's future age."[20]

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13 Tom Wright, *The Meal Jesus Gave Us* (London: Hodder, 2002), 34.

14 Stephen Kuhrt, *Tom Wright for Everyone* (London: SPCK, 2011).

15 Ibid., 59.

16 Ibid., 48.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 58. 2011/07.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 61.

Eucharist as a "Thin Place"

Within this broad ecclesiological context, we can begin to grasp the appropriate and valuable role of the sacraments. For Wright himself, "the sacraments are to be understood as special points, established by Jesus and used by the Holy Spirit to bring God's presence and new creation into the world."[21]

This is a sacramental theology, as Kuhrt says, "based on the biblical world-view of heaven and earth being understood as interlocking dimensions of the created order rather than distant from one another. It also rests upon continuity with the presentation of salvation in the Old Testament and the process towards God's ultimate intention to fill the whole of the world with his presence (Isaiah 11:9)." Old Testament anticipations of this can be seen in the "establishment of the Temple as the place where heaven and earth were joined and YHWH could be met (1 Kings 8) and the connection made, particularly in Isaiah, between the future renewal of the covenant and the renewal of creation (Isaiah 54-55)."

In this light, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist is made not a "bare" but an "effective" sign of God's salvation. It is given "to bring the Messiah's risen body, as that part of God's creation that has already been renewed, into the world."[22]

III Christ's Presence: Agreed Reality and Controverted Mode

It is important to appreciate that the Eucharistic presence of Christ has been a constant confession of the church throughout its history. Where Christians have differed sharply is "in accounts of how he is both host and food."[23] If Eucharist, then, is all about "presence" how *should* we think of the presence of the living Christ in relation to the Eucharist and the elements of bread and wine?

At the risk of bringing coals to Newcastle, let me quickly remind you of the principal understandings held within the church on this subject, offering in each case a brief assessment in light of the ecclesiology we have just sketched.

Aquinas

There is, first, the historic Roman Catholic view, with its doctrine of transubstantiation. The first thing to be noted about this teaching is its

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Wainwright, 215.

philosophical and theological sophistication. In this tradition "transubstantiation" is the term employed "for describing the process that takes place at the eucharistic consecration: the bread and wine undergo a 'metaphysical" change into Christ's blood and body." It follows that "the Eucharist is a sacrifice."[24]

It was of course the great Aquinas who formulated this official teaching. In seeking to explain the 'real presence' of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, Aquinas drew on the main school of philosophy that was available to him – that of Aristotle – with its distinction between a "substance" and its "properties." As Placher explains; "In the normal course of things, properties change, but the underlying substance remains the same. I paint a red box blue, and its color has changed from red to blue, but it remains a box. In the Eucharist, Aquinas said, the properties remain the same, but the substance changes. The elements still look and taste like bread and wine, but the bread and wine have been transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council affirmed transubstantiation as a doctrine of the church."[25]

Interestingly, like Catholics, the Orthodox regard the Eucharist primarily as a sacrifice. The Orthodox believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but unlike Catholics (or Lutherans, as we'll see in a minute), Orthodox tradition "refrains from human conceptual attempts to describe it."[26]

Michael Bird describes a conversation he had with an Orthodox priest. "Nikos, mate, how can the bread and wine be bread and wine and be Christ at the same time? After a brief pause he looked me in the eye and replied, 'Dashed if I know mate, it's just a mystery.'" The priest's language, in fact, was rather more colourful than my paraphrase suggests (after all, this conversation took place in Australia). As Bird, in my view rightly, says, the fact is we don't know, and we cannot know. Sophisticated a doctrine as transubstantiation has been, with its philosophical underpinnings, it certainly feels a strange notion today. Apart from this Eucharistic context, no one I think now holds by Aristotle's doctrine of substance and accidents. It did duty for its time.

Catholic theology itself has been aware of the problem – not least transubstantiation's apparent detraction from the uniqueness of the incarnation – and, particularly under the influence of late 19th century liturgical movements, modern Catholic theologians like Karl Rahner, Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeekx have attempted to produce a better formulation of the classic transubstantiation

24 Kärkäinnen, 366.

25 William C. Placher, ed., *Essentials of Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 227-8.

26 Kärkäinnen, 366.

doctrine. "In addition to reestablishing the integral link between the Word and sacraments, these theologians, through the notion of symbol, embodiment and relationality have conceived of the presence of Christ and the effects of the sacrament in a way that is also more in keeping with the general move away from a substance ontology to a relational ontology."[27] There have been discussions – notably in the work of Pannenberg - of the value of a term such as "transsignification," which simply means "a change in the 'meaning' of an act such as when a paper is 'changed' into a letter."[28] There is clearly much potential ecumenical mileage in these discussions. Things are moving on.

Luther

Turning to the Lutherans, they, of course, in substituting "consubstantiation" for what Luther saw as the crudity of "transubstantiation," still seek to secure the idea of Christ's real presence. With his doctrine of consubstantiation, Luther retained a bodily presence of Christ, "in, with and under" the sacramental elements. This was based in part on a "literal" reading of John 6 and, the "This is my body" affirmation, and partly on his view that a proper understanding of orthodoxy's *communicatio idiomatum* ("communication of attributes"), the human nature of Jesus must share in the divine ubiquity.[29] Personally, I find it difficult to disagree with the view that the difference between the Catholic and Lutheran positions is little more than a matter of semantics.

Zwingli

For Zwingli, in reaction to the perceived Catholic approach to the sacraments as involving other than the performance of sympathetic magic, there was simply no question of a "real presence" in the Eucharist. Despite Luther's protestations to the contrary, for Zwingli the Eucharist was a bare sign. Christ's body was present only in heaven. And that was that. The Eucharist was an act of pure remembrance – and nothing more.

Calvin

For Calvin, the sacraments related closely to the preaching of the gospel: "a

27 Ibid., 367.

28 Ibid.

29 Daniel J. Treier, "Jesus Christ, Doctrine of," in ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (London: SPCK, 2005), 367.

sacrament is never without a preceding promise but is joined to it as a sort of appendix."[30] When joined to the Word, however, not only do they fulfil the same office as the Word of God – "to offer and set forth the Christ to us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace"[31]- but their visible and physical component means that they do better what the Word does. "The sacraments bring the clearest promises, and they have this character over and above the Word because they represent them for us as painted in a picture from life."[32] They do not work *ex opera operato*, but to be effective must be received by faith on the part of the participant.

In Calvin's understanding, the Supper is essentially a banquet at which we feed on Christ.[33] He affirms the importance of holding "remembering" and "feeding" together, rejecting the notion that the Supper is a bare sign. Calvin recognized that in order to feed on Christ in the Supper, Christ himself must be present. His controversy with the Roman Catholic church was not about the fact but the mode of that presence. While refusing a literal meaning to the words, *this is my body*, he equally insists that in Jesus' instituting of the Supper, "there is a mystery of sacramental union here indicated that lifts His language far above being legitimately called 'figurative' without any qualification."[34] Calvin's theology of union with Christ, pervasively present in his Eucharistic writings, was central to his understanding of the Supper. The fact of union with Christ by His Spirit makes it quite unnecessary to locate that presence in the bread and wine. Rather, we are raised up to heaven (where the risen body of Jesus is located in the between-times), by the Spirit, to feed spiritually on Christ, even as we feed physically on the bread and wine to nourish our bodies.[35]

IV Why Would We Miss our Meal?

Even in light of this little sketch, it seems clear that further progress in our

30 John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 vols. Ed. John T. MacNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), IV, xiv, 3.

31 Ibid., xiv, 17.

32 *Ibid.,* xiv. 5.

33 Ibid., xvii. 1.

34 Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1995), 197.

35 John Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments; between the Ministers of the Church of Zurich and John Calvin, Minister of the Church of Geneva," in eds. Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet, *Selected Works of John Calvin, Tracts and Letters* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849; reprinted Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 240.

understanding of the Eucharist must involve a re-examination of the relevant biblical material. In that connection, someone has made the point that if a Martian had ever dropped into medieval discussions of the Eucharist, they would never have guessed that it was essentially a meal. With his usual incisiveness, Anthony Thiselton has pointed out that "in the Synoptic Gospels and in Paul the *context* of the administration of the Last Supper and Lord's Supper is crucial to its understanding."[36] Although this has been frequently neglected in the history of sacramental theology, fresh attention to the context of the Supper in the Gospels and Paul seems the route of greatest potential for the effective reinstatement of the Eucharist in the life of the church today.

Significance of the Passover Setting

That context was, of course, Jesus' observing of the *Jewish Passover meal.* The preparation of the meal as a preparation for the passive is made explicit in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 14:14; Matt. 26:17-19; Luke 22:7-13, 15). In Judaism the Passover liturgy is known as the *Sēder.* "This takes the form of reliving the narrative world of participants in the Passover (Exod. 12:1-51). In effect, participants 'relive' the Passover events of the deliverance from their bondage in Egypt, and the beginning of a new life as the redeemed people of God."[37]

With regard to our understanding of the Eucharist, Thiselton's observations are so important that I shall follow him further. Establishing the point that both Exodus 12 and the Jewish Mishnah make clear that the Passover is a *dramatic event* – in terms of the helpful way (the R.C.) Balthasar and (the Reformed) Kevin Vanhoozer describe doctrine – Thiselton offers a quotation from Exodus 12 and one from the Mishnah:

> Exod. 12:25-27: "When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord.'"

The Mishnah adds: "in every generation a man must *so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt*" (*m. Pesahim* 10:5).

Theologians like Jeremias and Leenhardt have demonstrated that "the Last

36 Thiselton (2015), 331.

37 Ibid.

Supper dovetails with observance of the Passover."[38] To offer one significant example, it has been shown that there are close parallels between the *Sēder* and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. The *Sēder* begins with the doxology: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the produce of the vine." Jeremias and Leenhardt link Jesus' blessing of the bread and wine with this. Those of us raised on the good old A.V. will recall that the bread, not God, is made the object of Jesus' blessing. The version I happen to use most of the time, the NRSV, follows suit by inserting an "it." But if Jeremias and Leenhardt are correct, as they seem almost certainly to be, there is no thought at all of "consecrating" the bread. In line with the *Sēder* parallel, it is God who is the object of blessing.

The *Sēder* then reads, "This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt" and as Leenhardt points out, it would have come as a tremendous surprise to the disciples when Jesus suddenly departed from the expected words, in their place pronouncing: "This is my body" (Matt. 26:26-27; 1 Cor. 11:24).[39]

This apparently deliberate linking by Jesus of the Last Supper and the Passover liturgy has important implications for our understanding of the meaning of "This is my body." Referring to the endless debates about whether the sentence is literal (Aquinas), fully and effectively symbolic (as Luther and Calvin thought); or metaphorical (Zwingli), Thiselton argues, persuasively I think, for a different understanding. Drawing on the use of the "dramatic" by Balthasar, Vanhoozer and Ricoeur, he makes a case for "dramatic" being a more appropriate word.[40]

For this he finds confirmation in an examination of "remembrance" (Gk. *anamnēsis;* Heb. *zēker*). "Do this in remembrance of me," reads 1 Cor. 11:24-25 and Luke 22:19. *Touto poieite eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*. As Thiselton points out, the Greek and Hebrew verb "does not just mean "to call to mind" in the sense of purely intellectual recollection."

His further comment is illuminating: "A generation ago the 'objective' force of the Hebrew was probably overstated, as if it were an objective, virtual *repetition* of a past event. Today most or probably all traditions recognize that the work of Christ on the cross remains in principle 'once for all' (Gk. *ephapax*). The Hebrew and Greek usage implies both this and also a middle course: that of *dramatic participation*. When believers pray to God: 'Remember the distress of your servants' (cf. Lam. 5:1; Exod. 32:13; Deut. 9:27; Ps. 20:3), they ask God to act as a participant in their woe."

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 332.

"The purpose of dramatic symbolism is to create a *narrative world* in which participants almost (but not literally) 'relive' their part. It is well summed up," concludes Thiselton, "by the black spiritual, 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?'"[41]

How Meals Function

The meal-nature of the Eucharist as initiated by Jesus is, I think, where a re-appropriation of the Eucharist in the context of church renewal requires to be focused in our time.

Across societies and cultures of all times and places, meals have been crucial to the development of relationships, a key contribution to social well-being. As Tim Chester says, "Food connects."[42] In each of the Gospels, particularly in Luke's Gospel, we see meals imbued with a deeply theological significance. In Luke the sentence "The Son of Man came…" is concluded in each of three ways: 1) "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45); 2) "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10); 3) "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking…" (Luke 7:34). As Chester says, if the first two are statements of purpose, "the third is a statement of method. *How* did Jesus come? He came eating and drinking."[43]

Jesus was seriously into eating and drinking, as the accusation of his enemies to the effect that he was "a glutton and a drunkard" (Luke 7:34) suggests. In Chester's words, "He did evangelism and discipleship round a table with some grilled fish, a loaf of bread and a jug of wine."[44] Luke Karris maybe exaggerates only slightly when he says, "In Luke's Gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal."[45]

Similarly, Rowan Williams sets his discussion of the Eucharist in the wider context of the many stories about Jesus and hospitality in the Gospels, especially Luke. "The meals that Jesus shares in his ministry are the way in which he begins to re-create a community, to lay the foundations for rethinking what the

41 Ibid.

42 Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community & Mission around the Table* (Nottingham: IVP, 2011), 10.

43 Ibid., 12.

44 Ibid., 13.

45 Ibid., 14.

words 'the people of God' mean."[46] He goes on to show that one of the major themes of the resurrection stories is the way in which all this starts over again on the far side of Jesus' death and resurrection – "that when the risen Christ eats with the disciples it is not just a way of proving he is 'really' there; it is a way of saying that what Jesus did in creating a new community during his earthly life, he is doing now with the apostles in his *risen* life." Which is why, "throughout the centuries since, Christians have been able to say exactly what the apostles say: they are the people with whom Jesus ate and drank after he was raised from the dead. Holy Communion makes no sense at all if you do not believe in the resurrection."

"In Holy Communion Jesus Christ tells us that he wants our company." That, says Williams, is possibly "the most simple thing we can say about Holy Communion, yet it is still supremely worth saying."[47] In Holy Communion we experience the call to "a new level of life together, a new fellowship and solidarity, and a new willingness and capacity to be welcomers [ourselves]," becoming "involved in Jesus' own continuing work of bridging the gulfs between people, drawing them into shared life, in the central task of bridging the gulf between God and humanity created by our selfish, forgetful and fearful habits."[48]

Here we are being encouraged to think in fresh ways about the Eucharist as a sacrament of God's great project of new creation. We remember how Jewish sacred meals – not least the Passover – were believed to function. As for Jewish families sitting around the Passover meal, for whom time and space telescope together, within the sacramental world of the Eucharist, in Tom Wright's words, "past and present are one. Together, they point forwards to the still future liberation."[49]

A Meal in Three Dimensions: "Past," "Present," "Future"

In this perspective, and to follow Wright's very helpful thoughts for a moment, we have to think of the Eucharistic meal in terms of three dimensions: past, present and future. "We break this bread to share in the body of Christ; we do it in remembrance of him; we become, for a moment, the disciples sitting around the table at the Last Supper." But in saying this we've only said half of what needs to be said. In Wright's words, "To make any headway in

46 Rowan Williams, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer* (London: SPCK, 2014), 44.

47 Ibid., 41.

48 Ibid., 46-7.

49 Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (London: SPCK, 2007), 286.

understanding the eucharist, we must see it just as much in terms of the arrival of God's future in the present, not just the extension of God's past (or of Jesus' past) into our present . . . The Jesus who gives himself to us as food and drink is himself [through the resurrection] the beginning of God's new world." And so, "at communion, we are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, tasting fruit plucked from the promised land. It is the future come to meet us in the present,"[50]

Wright I think is onto something deeply important [you may of course disagree] in holding that this eschatological perspective "is a far more helpful way to talk about the presence of Christ in the eucharist than any amount of redefinitions of the old language of transubstantiation." Such language was, he says, not so much the wrong answer as the right answer to the wrong question. "That was one way of saying what needed to be said [insistence on the true presence of Christ] in language that some people in the Middle Ages could understand, but it has produced all kinds of misunderstandings and abuse."[51]

As we have already seen, the Eucharist is the sacrament of new creation. The only part of the old creation which has yet been transformed and liberated from bondage to decay is the body of Christ, "the body which died on the cross and is now alive with a life that death can't touch. Jesus has gone ahead into God's new creation, and as we look back to his death through the lens he himself provided – that is, the meal he shared on the night he was betrayed – we find that he comes to meet us in and through the symbols of creation, the bread and the wine, which are thus taken up into the Christ-story, the event of new creation itself, and become vessels, carriers, of God's new world and the saving events which enable us to share it."[52]

In this light, every celebration of the Supper is a breaking into the present of God's future and the Supper is most fully understood "as the anticipation of the banquet when heaven and earth are made new, the marriage supper of the Lamb."[53]

A fully biblical eschatology makes clear that we anticipate not a disembodied future existence (as is commonly supposed in Christian folk religion) but, in terms for example of Revelation 21 and 22, a renewed physical world transformed from top to bottom.

50 Ibid., 286-7.

51 Ibid., 287.

52 Ibid., 287-8.

53 Ibid., 288.

Why not Grain and Water?

In this connection, Peter Leithart offers helpful reflections on the significance of the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine.[54] He suggests we think less about the physics of the bread than of the simple fact that Jesus chose to use bread, rather than e.g. roasted grain or red meat. Pointing out that we are a bread-making humanity and that bread production 'assumes some degree of developed agriculture, the technology of milling flour and baking, and an exchange system that enables the bread to arrive at the Table,' Leithart argues that in offering bread at His feast, Jesus was taking up this whole system into the kingdom as well.[55]

Similarly, at the Lord's Supper we drink wine. Jesus did not give his disciples grapes 'but the blood of the grape, which is the creation transformed by creativity and labour… Like bread, wine assumes a degree of technological sophistication, as well as a measure of social and political formation.' In this way 'the table discloses the mystery of the creature's participation in the Creator's creativity, and this participation produces goods that are ours only as gifts received, goods to be shared and enjoyed in communion. The Supper closes the gap between joy in creation and pious devotion to God.'[56]

Leithart notes, however, that in the case of wine we dealing with a drink not merely of nutrition but of celebration. The vision of life implied by the use of wine is not purely utilitarian (bread and water in that case would have sufficed) but celebratory. There is an echo here of Calvin, who claimed emphatically that the very structure of creation indicates that it exists to be enjoyed and not merely used.[57]

In more directly biblical perspective, Leithart argues that wine has both sabbatical and eschatological significance. Wine is appropriate as a Sabbath drink because it induces relaxation. The priests of Israel never did relax while they ministered for the blood of their sacrifices did not atone for sin (see Heb. 10:11-14). Under the terms of the old covenant, no one could enjoy the full Sabbath. The drinking of wine in the immediate presence of God was strictly

54 See Peter J. Leithart, *Blessed are the hungry. Meditations on the Lord's Supper* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2000). I have been unable to peruse this work, apart from a few on-line excerpts, but have accessed three of Leithart's on-line articles (see below) in which some of his distinctive thoughts on the Supper are summarized.

55 Leithart, 'Worship and World', *First Things*, 30th March 2015; https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2015/03/worship-and-world.

56 Leithart, 'Do This', *First Things*, 23rd March 2012; https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2012/03/do-this.

57 Calvin, *Inst*. 3.10.2.

prohibited (Lev. 10:9). With the coming, however, of a new and better covenant in Jesus, involving the shedding of better blood, the Lord invites his people to a joyous banquet of wine.

A 'Sabbath drink', 'wine takes time to make, and you drink wine at the end of things, when your work is completed.' Through the shedding of Christ's blood, 'we have entered into rest. We are in the sanctuary drinking wine, a sign not only of the joy but of the rest of the New Covenant.'[58] The drinking of wine is therefore a wonderfully fitting anticipation of the joy-filled coming banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb, when heaven and earth will be joined together in perfect unity.

Unity is all

Before offering a few words by way of conclusion, it would be wrong not to say something about the central blessing of this meal as the sacrament of the church's unity. We eat the bread and drink the wine *together*. We have come round full circle really, for we began by highlighting the tragedy of the fact that this meal given us by Jesus to express our unity in Christ has been so often the cause of our deepest and most bitter divisions, with every side convinced that they have a uniquely accurate grasp of the scriptural teaching. It might be tempting to follow our Salvationist friends and impose a moratorium on eucharistic celebration in all our churches until we've got this fully sorted out. I fear we would never reach agreement on that either. We are certainly called to redouble our efforts to maximise the practice of eucharistic hospitality within and between our churches, and, as we have seen, some progress has been made. The challenge is urgent, for we cannot expect to evangelize the world when we cannot even eat together.

In 1 Corinthians Paul lays great emphasis on the fact that the 'one loaf' (1 Cor. 10:16) is representative of the unity of one people with their one Lord. In the only passage in his writings where Paul handles the Lord's Supper, it is significant that it was a serious problem over unity that called forth his reflection.[59]

58 Leithart, 'Eucharistic Meditation', *First Things*, 7th April 2004 (http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2013/04/eucharistic-meditation-133).

59 It is a remarkable feature of the Lord's Supper in Paul's letters that "were it not for First Corinthians, we would not even know that it was practised in Pauline communities." Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology. Magnifying God in Christ* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 730. One can but assume that having handed on to his churches the Eucharistic tradition he had received, the Supper was regularly observed in these churches without any problem requiring to be addressed in Paul's – let's remember – always *occasional* correspondence.

'Together' is the way things are intended to be. God's ultimate purpose is the bringing together of all things under Christ as head. At the Supper, we are reminded that 'the ideal world is not a world of atomized individuals but an irreducibly social reality. Because we eat together of one loaf, we are one Body, members not only of Christ but of one another (1 Cor. 10:17), called to radical, Christ-like, self-sacrificing love, to use whatever gifts we have for the edification of the Body, to live lives of forgiveness, forebearance and peace.'[60]

It was at this point that things had gone so badly wrong in the Corinthian church. Arguably the single most important thing about this passage is its summons to the contemporary church, as the right way forward for us all, to reconnect what we should never have allowed to come apart – the theological and the social dimensions of the Supper. Ironically, it is likely the very problem that broke surface in Corinth that brought about this disastrous separation in the first place.

Clearly, the Lord's Supper in the Pauline communities was celebrated in a social context, as part of a regular meal. As was (and is) appropriate, the churches were representative of every social class. What seems to have happened – there are different ways of interpreting the evidence - is that at these shared meals the rich members in the community were eating and drinking prodigiously, while the poor were not even receiving sufficient to eat. It's probable that the rich arrived early for the meal. It was effortless for them to do so. The poor – the majority of them presumably slaves – could only join the congregation when their work was done, likely late at night. It was, apparently, too much trouble for the rich to wait for them, so they set about the meal at their personal convenience, and by the time the slaves were released from duty, their rich brothers (and sisters?) have consumed most of what is available.

Paul is livid. By preserving, in this way, distinctions commonly characteristic of pagan society, the rich believers are guilty of dishonouring God and humiliating their poorer brothers and sister. Hence the urgency of Paul's *allēlous ekdechesthe* (1 Cor. 11:33): 'Wait for one another', or, if you prefer, 'Accept, receive, welcome one another.' A summons applying to so many situations.

So serious, in fact, is this business, that Paul denies they are celebrating the Lord's Supper at all. In so behaving, the rich have failed to discern the Lord's body. The Supper after all signifies Christ's giving his life for the sake of others. By his death he created one people and so when fellow believers are shamefully mistreated it demonstrates with shocking clarity that they haven't a 'scooby' why Christ died. True remembrance in the Supper invariably brings transformation

60 Leithart (2000), 172.

of one's life. As Schreiner says, 'Those who have truly experienced God's grace as mediated in Christ's death long to bless others, just as they themselves have received the blessing of forgiveness through Christ's self-giving on their behalf.'[61]

In a recent weekly Angelus address, Pope Francis put it well: 'The Eucharist, source of love for the life of the Church, is a school of love and solidarity. Those who nourish themselves from the Bread of Christ cannot remain indifferent in face of the many who do not have their daily bread.'

V Conclusion

A few brief words of conclusion. These are, effectively, mere bullet-points for further discussion, requiring to be drawn out in much greater detail, in light of the paper as a whole. I am indebted to a number of helpful reflections of Steve Motyer, in a brief, but frequently suggestive, book.[62]

1 In thinking of and discussing the place of the Eucharist in the life of the church today we must concentrate afresh on the rite as "the meal which Jesus gave" and seek further to work out the implications of that for our Eucharistic theology and practice.

2 We must live with the mystery of the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper but also with the conviction of the reality of his presence with us. Our expectations in this regard must be high. Robert Bruce spoke of the way in which we receive the same Christ in Word and Sacrament; but in the Lord's Supper we get more of the same Christ. In the preaching of the Word, we get him, as it were between our thumb and forefinger; in the Supper, where all our senses are employed, we receive him in our whole hand.

3 The Supper is a family meal and the priesthood of all believers in the one family suggests that any Christian of good standing in the community (one who "walks the walk" as well as "talks the talk") may properly preside at the Eucharist.

4 As the Passover context suggests, all baptized adults and children should be permitted to participate. The practice of Eucharistic hospitality among all who are baptized, of whatever denomination, should be recognized as of dominical authority.

61 Schreiner*, op. cit*., 733.

62 Steve Motyer, *Remember Jesus* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 1995).

5 Serious consideration should be given to reinstating the ancient, and New Testament, practice of celebrating the Eucharist in the context of a love feast (*agape*).

6 Our sharing in the Eucharist should be pervaded with a spirit of joy and celebration, not of warning and gloom. While we are called to self-examination, abusive forms of "fencing the table," with its regular majoring on the minors, successfully keeping many fearful souls away from the Lord's Table who ought to be there, should be shunned. The great warning of 1 Cor. 11 is not about our (highly subjective) "spiritual experience" – so often really about power-play and shows of spiritual superiority, but with regard to holding our fellow-Christians in contempt by the way we treat them.

7 In saying all this, we must recognize seeking to move forward in well-grounded Eucharistic understanding and practice, we are where we are and must begin there. In the spirit of our Lord, and in the spirit of 1 Cor. 11, we have to wait for each other and seek to move forward together, maintaining all the time "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

Arguably, the Eucharist has been left too long in the hands of the theologians. They've not done too good a job with it, building the most elaborate and sophisticated sacramental structures on a foundation that was designed for something quite different. I think I can hear Paul calling out to the church today: *KISS* – not merely a reference to the sign of reconciliation so badly needed between our so-called communions. But *KISS* as a design principle noted by the US Navy in 1960: *Keep it simple stupid***.** The principle states that most systems (including theological ones) work best if they are kept *simple* rather than made complicated; therefore simplicity should be a key goal in design and unnecessary complexity should be avoided. Our failure to keep it simple has led to so many painful and damaging divisions.

The late, great Alan Lewis spoke words of gracious but penetrating rebuke to the contemporary church which we all do well to heed. Referring to the weak, but powerful and unifying "word of the cross" (able, under God, to unify our cities, nations and the cosmos), he states that it "is just that word which we shamefully contradict and falsify when we enact sacraments of human unity within churches which are themselves unreconciled, and as the body of Christ itself dismembered and recrucified, not one at all but splintered and fractured beyond belief." Sadly, our "sacramental actions mirror, and to often in history have added to, the world's fragmentation, by leaving in pace barriers which Christ's baptism of death demolished, and by mocking his universal, messianic

banquet through withholding table fellowship from one another."[63]

Solemn and sobering words. Our responsibility and privilege in regard to the celebration of the Eucharist is mind-blowing. Leithart does not exaggerate when he says, "[The] Lord's Supper is the world in miniature; it has cosmic significance." What would it do for our celebration of the Eucharist if, on each occasion, we really grasped that "we are displaying in history a glimpse of the end of history and anticipating in this world the order of the world to come. Our feast is not the initial form of one small part of the new creation; it is the initial form of the new creation itself. And this means that the feast we already enjoy is as wide in scope as the feast that we will enjoy in the new creation. That is to say, it is as wide as creation itself."[64]

One of the most urgent tasks before the contemporary church is that of restoring to its proper place this Christ-given sacrament of our unity as Christians and, to that end, of reconnecting the social and theological dimension of the Eucharist, as a means towards the renewing of the church and the forward thrust of its mission. The church has still to discover the full richness and potential of this sacrament of new creation, as we work together for the building of our Lord's kingdom today.

63 Alan E. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 394-5. T.F. Torrance regarded this work of Lewis as "the most remarkable and moving book I have ever read" (in his blurb for the book).

64 Leithart (2000), 15.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB

(Job 19:23-27a)

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The Gospel according to Job: "For I know that my Redeemer lives"[1] (19:25a), Job confesses and proclaims.

He *knows* that his Redeemer lives! But how did Job come to this knowledge, this personal confession of faith? And if you don't think that deep and genuine faith can come to us via the path of suffering, then I'd like to introduce you to my good friend Job.

Before we hear Job's profession, however, we must first learn how he got to that point. When we read the beginning of the very same chapter, we learn and hear of Job's intense anger toward his friends, which soon becomes Job's accusation against God himself. Job speaks first to his friends before he targets God when he says:

> How long will you torment me, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me? And even if it is true that I have erred, my error remains with myself. If indeed you magnify yourselves against me, and make my humiliation an argument against me, know then that God has put me in the wrong, and closed his net about me (19:2-6).

Now how is it possible that Job would say that God has wronged him (19:6) while at the same time and only shortly later that he knows his redeemer lives (19:25a)? And why his anger toward his friends?

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1 All translations are from John C. L. Gibson's *Job* (Phila.: Westminster, 1985), unless otherwise noted.

The friends first appear in the book's prologue, which is a traditional folk tale of piety and yet of tragedy. As readers we know that Job, as the text says, "was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (1:1b). As the story continues, God permits Satan to put Job to the test, including the death of Job's animals, servants, and children (and then later inflicting Job with painful sores all over his body as a second test). Job mourns his loss and grief: he "rent his robe, and shaved his head" (1:20a). But he then "fell upon the ground, and worshipped," exclaiming:

> Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
>
> May the name of the Lord be praised (1:20b-21).

But Job's wife is not as pious and patient! She says to him: "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die" (2:9). Her one line in the whole book! I considered "*Curse God and Die!*" as a sermon title, but decided it wasn't too edifying. But I also considered that she, perhaps, anticipates the main theme of the book, which is about *God*, not about Job.

Job's wife has a brief but poignant presence in the book. She speaks as a mother who just lost her children. She herself is crying out in the pain and agony of the deepest loss imaginable. In Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, one of the brothers, Ivan, comments on the tragedy of the loss of children: "I made up my mind long ago not to understand. If I try to understand anything, I will be false to the facts and I have determined to stick to the facts."[2]

While I was talking with a mom who had lost two of her children, she said to me: "There is nothing worse in life than to have your children die before you do. *I can no longer pray*." That's a very heartfelt response from a mom experiencing such deep grief and tragic loss. She could no longer accept an all-controlling God that contradicted her own personal experience. So she could only cry out in protest, just as Job's wife cried out in her grief and encouraged her husband to curse God.

Both moms shared the traditional theology of the prologue, which Job summarized while telling his wife, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (2:10).

Now *if you skip the next nearly 40 chapters of Job*, you'll see in the epilogue (42:10ff.) that Job was rewarded for his faith with restored fortunes, new animals, and even new children! So the prologue and epilogue of Job form a traditional, intact, pious folk tale: God gives and God takes; may his name be praised.

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2 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (NY: Signet, 1957), 224.

But that is **NOT** the whole, or even the main, story of Job.

Job's friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar — perhaps name choices for those of you with growing families! — appear to comfort him, cry with him, and express their sympathy for their friend in seven days of silence, "and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great" (2:13b). These were Job's friends at their best: They kept their mouths shut. Sometimes that's the best wisdom: To say *nothing* when tragedy should *not* be explained but only mourned. Job's friends were at their best when they sat and stayed with him in the deepest sympathy possible: silence in face of the suffering of a loved one.

At this point in the story, the narrative flow of Job suddenly shifts to a massive dialogue and debate between Job and his friends, which begins in ch. 3. Everything now changes when Job cries out to God, cursing the day of his birth (3:1-19). He complains to *God Almighty* for his *unjustified suffering*. He questions, "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, whom God has hedged in?" (3:23). This is *not* the Job of the previous chapter who thanked God for what is good *and* for what is awful. His personal experience contradicts his traditional theology, and so he can no longer believe what he used to believe.

So in Job we are dealing with his main struggle in life: What does he do when his beliefs contradict his experience?

And we too need to ask ourselves: What do we do if we feel the same contradiction in life?

For the next 20 chapters, Job's friends and counselors blame Job for his troubles and tell him to *repent* of his sins! They insist upon the traditional doctrine of retribution, which Eliphaz summarizes:

> Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright ever cut off? As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same (4:7-8).

They have a short and simple statement for their friend Job: You reap what you sow. Their vocal exhortations to him are concealed condemnations. *Exhortations and condemnations!*

What is excruciatingly painful for Job and his wife is that they *agree* with the traditional theology of Job's friends. This is precisely why Job experiences an anguish and an anger that he expresses to his friends but then focuses on God Almighty. "How long will you torment me and crush me with words?," he complains to his friends (19:2). But if what the friends say is true — which again is what Job and his wife believe, or at least used to believe — "then know that God has put me in the wrong, and closed his net about me" (19:6), Job complains.

Job's agonies are too real to indulge academic debate with his friends regarding *why* God supposedly permits or sanctions terrible evil and unjust suffering. Instead he focuses on *who* God is, but midway through the book, he still feels that God has failed him and tortured him. God is still almighty, Job believes, but he is not good. Job's theology has led him to disappointment. Praising God both for good and for evil no longer works. And yes: Theology can be dangerous!

And so from today's alternate lectionary reading:

23 Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
24 Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were graven in the rock forever!

Job is *not* content writing his complaint against God on the papyrus of a scroll. *No, for the sake of posterity, he wants to engrave his words with an iron tool on solid rock!* He wishes that his demand for vindication would be "engraved in the rock forever!" (19:24b). Job *knows* he is innocent (as God himself had declared in ch. 1: "there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" [1:8b]). So Job takes God to task.

We cannot understand today's reading if we don't see earlier in ch. 19 that Job shifts his complaint against his friends to accusing *God himself* (19:1-6), which is a similar shift from the popular piety of the prologue, which focused on a test of Job's faith, to the protest poetry of the dialogue — the great bulk of the book — which focused on God's justice.

Unlike the syrupy and self-centered spirituality of our own culture — maybe even here in Asheville! — the book of Job is a magnificent masterpiece of protest poetry. Tennyson called it "the greatest poem of ancient and modern times." The book of Job is **NOT** about *our* spirituality — like here in Asheville where "spiritual but not religious" *is* the dominant "religion" of the town! The "religion" of Asheville, as is prevalent in larger American culture, is disorganized and do-it-yourself religion.

Job is a deeply and personally probing book about **GOD**. It's not about us, our faith, our beliefs, or our spirituality. The book of Job is the gospel of grace in the very center of the Hebrew Scriptures, which points us and lifts us beyond ourselves to encounter God, even in the midst of the worst suffering imaginable.

The Elephant Man is a movie that depicts the grotesque deformity of John Merrick and the cruel inhumanity of those around him — kind of like Job's friends. A doctor rescues him from a circus, where he was on display, but the doctor too treats John Merrick as a medical abnormality for investigation. Eventually, however, the doctor and a nurse start treating him as a human being. John

Merrick never had a physical healing, but the human kindness, support, and affirmation of others help create a greater miracle than physical healing. When John Merrick lies down to sleep for the last time, he dies in peace — even without physical healing. In the morning, the sun rises and shines through a church model that John Merrick had just finished building, like the light and love of God.

John Merrick in real life said of his model of a church (which was of St. Phillip's in London): "It is not stone and steel and glass; it is an imitation of grace flying up and up from the mud."

Our friend Job also cries out for the *real and living God of grace*. How is it possible that Job goes from blaming God for his problems to confessing his hope in God? Just verses later, in a sudden shift in this book of paradox, irony, and mystery, Job now confesses:

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;
26 and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,
27a whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

Some commentators[3] consider the "Redeemer" of v. 25 as someone different from the "God" of vv. 26-7. They reason that it's not "logical" to appeal to God against God! These commentators (like Job's friends!) are dismissing the irrational element of Job — the paradox, irony, and mystery of Job — because it's "illogical"?

The strange logic and admittedly contradictory nature of Job's faith is common

3 Norman C. Habel's *The Book of Job* comments: for the redeemer to "be one and the same person as his cruel opponent seems quite illogical, inconsistent, and, from Job's perspective, intolerable"; furthermore, "it would mean a complete reversal in the pattern of Job's thought to date . . ." (Phila.: Westminster, 1985), 305f. Marvin H. Pope's *Job* similarly suggests that applying the term redeemer "to God in this context is also questionable since elsewhere in Job's complaint it is God himself who is Job's adversary rather than defender" (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 134. For a refutation of the view that Job's tortured state of mind should be held to a standard of logic, see John C. L. Gibson, *Job* (Phila. Westminster, 1985), 152; Robert Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1965), 87f.; and H. H. Rowley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 138. Arthur S. Peake's *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament* speaks in the spirit of Job, acknowledging the alleged or apparent irrationality of his thought: "Here the poet advances to one of his deepest thoughts. Not only does Job appeal from man to God, but he appeals from God to God" (London: Epworth, 1904), 83.

in the protest literature of the Old Testament: Just consider the many psalms of lament that begin with protest and end in praise. Ps. 22, for example, begins with "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (NKJV). And yet within just a few verses, David acknowledges that God has delivered his ancestors: "They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed" (22:5). Yes, Job's feelings fluctuate too as he questions God and cries out for his help at the same time!

David's cry in Ps. 22 — "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me" — is the Old Testament verse which Jesus himself cried out from the cross, *for us and on our behalf*. Some of the worst so-called evangelical theology interprets this god-forsaken cry to mean that the Father turned his back on Jesus — in his Son's moment of need when the salvation of the world was at stake! ***It's just the opposite: God himself took up our cry, David's cry, and Job's cry.***

Job had exclaimed back in ch. 16:

> Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high. My friends scorn me; my eyes pour out tears to God, that he would maintain the right of a man with God, like that of a man with his neighbour (19-21).

The Redeemer in our text today is none other than God on high! The Hebrew word (*go-el*) for Redeemer refers to the duties and obligations of family members to protect and defend the rights of their loved ones in trouble, of relatives who are weak and in need of one who would "redeem" them from misfortune or death. For Job, nothing less than God as his Advocate will do or help.

Even while staring into the abyss, Job confesses that his Redeemer lives and will stand by his side and on his behalf! *He wants his day in court with God, but he wants God himself to descend from Heaven on High and stand next to Job by his side and upon the Earth.*

Like his friends, Job wants to *know*: Why does God permit suffering? Job and his friends both accept the validity of this question, even though they draw opposite conclusions. But when God appears — with questions of his own — Job confesses the limits of what he can know. In the end, Job quotes God, "Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?" (42:3a).

Then Job replies, "Therefore I have uttered *what I did not understand*, things too wonderful for me to know, which I did not know" (42:3b). Job now knows who God is: He is his Redeemer, Advocate, and Defender. He now adores, confesses, and worships God in his mystery and transcendence, even though he now gets that he doesn't understand life in all of its complications. Job confesses that we humans cannot understand the mysteries of the universe and the tensions,

ambiguities, and perplexities of human life.

And then Job finally confesses, "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee" (42:5). Despite all of his suffering — nay, in the very midst of his terrible circumstances — his prayer and hope are now fulfilled before the very presence of God.

The book of Job, **the Gospel according to Job**, concludes with what Job had cried out for in today's lectionary reading, which I will read one last time:

> But in my heart I know that *my vindicator lives*
> and that he will rise last to speak in court;
> and I shall discern my witness *standing at my side*
> and see my defending counsel, even ***God himself,***
> whom I shall see with *my own eyes*, I myself and no other
>
> (19:25-7a NEB; emphasis added).

This is the Gospel according to Job.

Addendum, January 10, 2020

CHRISTOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY: A TORRANCEAN APPROACH

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Abstract: *Filling a gap in the study of ecclesiology by addressing ecclesiological method, this paper examines the work of Scottish theologian Thomas Forsyth Torrance specifically with the World Council of Churches. Modern ecclesiologies fail to provide a robust definition of the Church's nature due to their lack of a robust ecclesiological method resulting in an anemic understanding of the Church's nature and significance. In this paper, I argue that the ecclesiological method of T. F. Torrance can overcome this problem by understanding the Church kata physin, that is according to nature.*

Key words: *T. F. Torrance, Ecclesiology, Christology, Church, Nature, Science*

T. F. Torrance was convinced that we are guilty of two errors. First, "the dissolution of Christology and the displacement of Christ by man," and second, "the mythologization of the Church and the obscuring of Christ by the Church."[1] In order to overcome these errors, Torrance argued that we must wrestle with ecclesiology in a similar way that the early church wrestled with Christology without falling into the error that the Church is somehow pre-existent or in some way an *alter Christus.* For Torrance, Christology must be the starting point of a faithful ecclesiology for it is only when ecclesiology is approached through

[1] Thomas F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement In the Church, Vol 1.* (Wipf & Stock Pub, 1996), 13.

Jesus Christ that "we produce...a doctrine of the Church in which our differences are lost sight of because they are destroyed from behind by a masterful faith in the Savior of men."[2]

Torrance was right, we must wrestle with ecclesiology in a similar way that the early church wrestled with Christology. However, a look at recently published literature as well as recent theology conference schedules reveals that this is not happening.[3] Many books on ecclesiology are being written by those in pastoral ministry and not by professional theologians and as such the focus of these popular ecclesiology books tends to focus on what the Church does rather than on what the Church is at its core, in its nature. This focus on what the Church does has led to an ecclesiological focus on the things that make local churches different from each other rather than on what unites them. These volumes, while well meaning, struggle to contribute to God's desire for ecclesial unity. Modern ecclesiologies fail to provide a robust definition of the Church's nature due to their lack of a robust ecclesiological method resulting in an anemic understanding of the Church's nature and significance. In this paper, *I argue that the ecclesiological method of T. F. Torrance can overcome this problem of disunity by understanding the Church kata physin, that is according to nature.* I am calling this method Christological ecclesiology.

This thesis will be accomplished in *three* parts. It is necessary to begin by examining the *kata physin* (according to nature) method of Torrance in order to fully understand his ecclesiology. Once his theological method has been elucidated, his ecclesiology will be explored in *two* parts: the nature of the

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[2] Ibid, 19.

[3] A quick look at some of the main publishing houses such as Zondervan, Crossway, Baker Academic, T&T Clark, etc. reveals that few books have recently been published on this topic and those that have are not focused on wrestling with the idea of the nature of the Church but rather wrestle with what the Church does. Though a much needed three volume ecclesiology dealing with this topic is forthcoming from Prof. Tom Greggs (University of Aberdeen) with volume I due in 2019, a look at recent conference programs from ETS, AAR, and SBL reveal very little time spent on ecclesiology and little to no time spent on the nature of the Church.

Church and the unity of the Church. I do not plan to solve the proposed issue in this paper but rather, this paper serves as a starting point, a conversation starter as we begin to move forward in wrestling with the doctrine of the Church so that our witness as the Church is not hindered by our disunity but rather promoted through our unity.

I. KATA PHYSIN: KNOWING ACCORDING TO NATURE

When God created the world he created it out of nothing and chose to place us within space and time. Space and time is the medium through which He interacts with us. Thus, it is *within* space and time that our epistemological inquiry, whether that be of the natural world or of God, is bound and determined by space and time. It is in this space and time that the communities of science and the Church are working side by side "seeking to communicate understanding in the forms of human thought and speech that arise within them."[4] It is due to this overlap of inquiry in science and in theology that theology can take a cue from science as to how it attempts to articulate knowledge concerning the object being studied. Thus, the starting place of epistemological inquiry into an object must begin with the confession that scientific and theological inquiry both "have to let their thinking serve the realities into which they inquire."[5]

For Torrance, ontology and epistemology must happen simultaneously. The ontology of the object of study is determinative for our knowing of that object. Torrance scholars refer to this as the *kata physin*. That is, study "according to nature." As Torrance says,

> In every field we know something in accordance with its nature, and so we let its nature determine for us the mode of rationality we must adopt toward it and the form of learning or discovery

[4] Thomas F. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 113.

[5] Ibid.

appropriate to it.[6]

For instance, the object of our study in theology proper is God. As knowledge of God is self-revealing it is not an object in which we place ourselves over and above the object in which we extrapolate information from it but rather we adjust our method of study and we place ourselves before and under it in order to "listen to what it has to say to us in its own self-disclosure."[7]

For Torrance, modern theology must listen to the natural scientific method in its attempt to discover objective truth by knowing according to the nature of the object to be studied for we are "rational when we act in accordance with the nature of the object."[8] The problem arises in human thought, however, as it is "bound up with the institutions, patterns, and traditions of the communities in which we live."[9] In other words, we cannot abstract human thought from its language and society. All human thought takes place within a particular space and a particular time. This context can bring false subjectivity into our inquiry. Torrance does not argue that this context is itself bad but rather that theology should take a hint from natural scientific inquiry and attempt to cut behind this subjectivity in order to understand an object as it is in its nature. This method of inquiry can help us to gain the most objective knowledge about what we are studying by cutting "through our common and traditional thought down to the roots of our concepts, clearing away the confusion that comes from the admixture of false subjectivity..."[10]

This "scientific theology" becomes necessary if we are to overcome the subjectivity of inquiry and pursue objective reality. What tends to happen in the field of natural sciences in pursuit of objective knowledge of reality is the

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[6] Ibid, 114.

[7] Ibid, 115.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

struggle that it must wrestle with in the formation of new terms and concepts in tension with the commonly understood and accepted ways of being. This method allows scientific inquiry to transcend popular language and move towards freeing itself from "the hardening formulation and self-entrenchment of society."[11] This method of scientific inquiry seeks to understand objective reality as it is which it then communicates to society in such a way as to form society. A different procedure of inquiry has developed in theology in connection with the Church's goal to communicate with the "common man."

In this procedure, theology is translated into the language and thought-forms of the people and the culture of the day, with the result that it suffers from the backward drag of popular religion and the ideological twist of the prevailing consciousness. Thus the theology of the Church is tempted to become the servant of public opinion; but since the popular thought tends to be a sedimentary deposit within our naturalistic existence of outworn scientific ideas, theology through this procedure acquires a built-in obsolescence.[12]

This is especially important for ecclesiological inquiry as the majority of writing and study that has taken place in ecclesiology has been on the lay level and this has caused ecclesiology to become the "servant of public opinion." Torrance argued that a new method of ecclesiology is critical in order for us to begin to cut away all the non-theological factors that have embedded themselves in our understanding of the nature and mission of the Church. It is time for the Church to use this proposed scientific theology in order to wrestle with the doctrine of the Church in the same way that the early Church wrestled with the doctrine of Christ in order to overcome the errors of mythologizing the

[11] Ibid, 118.

[12] Ibid. For Torrance, this problem requires scientific questioning which "reinforces the evangelical demand for repentance or *metanoia*, that is an alteration in the basic structure of our mind… If the Church is the community of those who are emancipated by the truth of Christ, and who are redeemed by His power from sin and self-will and therefore from imprisonment in the self centred and arbitrary preconceptions of the self, then the adoption of rigorous scientific procedures in ecumenism must serve the evangelical edification and renewal of the Church." Ibid, 119.

Church and obscuring Christ with the Church and to get back on track with participating in the mission of Christ to reconcile the world to Himself.

As the title indicates, the focus of this article is to extrapolate the ecclesiology of T. F. Torrance as a way forward in the field of ecclesiological studies. It is to his understanding of ecclesiology that we now turn as a case study for doing ecclesiology according to the above discussed methodology.

II. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

In Acts 9, Luke records the story of Saul's conversion to Christianity. What is intriguing about this event is how Jesus speaks to Saul on the road to Damascus. The first question that he asks Saul is "why are you persecuting me?" (ESV) Saul responds with a question "Who are you Lord?" To which Jesus responds, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." While this might not seem relevant to ecclesiology, it is in fact the starting point of ecclesiology. It is here that Jesus gives us a clue as to what the Church is. We could understand Jesus to be saying "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. The Church that you are persecuting is Me, it is My Body. I am the Church." As Torrance argues, "That is the place to begin in our understanding of the nature of the Church."[13] We must begin to understand the Church as it is in its essence, Jesus Himself.

While there are many analogies used in the Bible to refer to the Church one that seems to encapsulate them all is the idea that the Church is the Body of Christ which Paul uses in multiple places (Ephesians 5, Colossians 1:18, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12, etc.) Torrance argues that this analogy is of primary importance for a couple of reasons. First, it is "the most deeply Christological of them all, and refers us directly to Christ Himself, the Head and Saviour of the Body."[14] Second, this analogy at once directs our attention not to the Body itself but the emphasis of the analogy is on Christ not on Body. This is important for when we begin to think about the Church we can easily become

[13] Thomas Torrance, "What Is the Church?," *The Ecumenical Review* 11, no. 1 (1958): 8.

[14] Ibid, 6.

distracted by and so focused on "the Body" rather than Christ that the "Church tends to come between us and the Lord."[15] The emphasis in this analogy helps to focus our thinking about the Church in such a way that we are forced not to think of the Church in sociological or anthropological language as a human institution but rather it causes us to think about the Church as it is. As the Church belongs to Him, He has made His own and which He is the head to which the Church submits in everything. "*The Church is the Body of Christ.*"[16] Jesus Christ is the *essence* of the Church and as such any faithful ecclesiology must be a necessarily Christological ecclesiology.

What does it mean that the Church is the "Body of Christ?" Simply put, the Church is only ever the Church *in Christ*. In the Incarnation Jesus assumed us into union with Himself and therefore with the Godhead. "He identified Himself with us, made Himself one with us, and on that ground claims us as His own, lays hold of us, and assumes us into union and communion with Him, so that as Church we find our essential being and life not in ourselves but in Him alone."[17] Thus, the Church originated in the incarnation when Jesus became human. As such, the Church cannot exist apart from Christ for it is in Christ that the Church finds its life and mission from being in union with Christ Himself.

There seems to be an apparent problem with this approach. How then are we to affirm the theological proposition that the Church is the Body of Christ and that Christ is the essence of the Church without arguing that the Church is Christ or that the Church is somehow an extension of the Incarnation or a prolongation of Jesus Himself? Torrance says that all analogies must be "subordinated to, and criticised by, the unique Revelation of the Father in the Son, for it is solely from the Incarnate Son that they have their legitimate place in Christian theology and therefore it is only in accordance with the analogy of

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[15] Ibid, 7.

[16] Ibid, 6.

[17] Ibid, 9.

Christ that they are to be applied."[18] In other words, Christology can and must help us to rightly understand the Church as the Body of Christ.

The Chalcedonian creed argues concerning the Hypostatic Union that Christ is both fully human and fully man without confusion (*inconfuse)*, without separation (*inseparabiliter)*. It is a helpful way to speak regarding the nature of Christ in order to avoid falling into the heretical pits of Docetism and the like. It is this language *without confusion and without separation* that we can and should apply in our ecclesiology. The Church is the Body of Christ and Christ is the essence of the church without confusion and without separation. The Church being the Body of Christ without confusion (*inconfuse)* "would negate a docetic conception of the Church as if it had been transubstantiated into something beyond history," and the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ without separation (*inseparabiliter)* "would negate a conception of the Church which divorced it from ontological union with Christ Himself."[19]

The Church is only ever the Church as it is *IN Christ*. The Church only exists because Jesus, who became incarnate, chose to identify Himself with us, make Himself one with us, and assume us into unity and communion with Him. This means that as the Church "We find our essential being and life not in ourselves but in Him alone."[20] Only as we participate in Christ are we the Church. It is this ontological participation in Christ, this sharing in the being and life of Christ that the Church is to be thought of as the Body of Christ and it is "only on the ground of this participation in Christ Himself is the Church a community of believers, a communion of love, a fellowship of reconciliation on earth."[21]

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[18] Thomas F. Torrance, "Atonement and the Oneness of the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7, no. 3 (September 1954): 253.

[19] Ibid, 253-254.

[20] Torrance, "What is the Church?" 9.

[21] Ibid.

Now that a basic understanding of the nature of the Church has been set forth we can begin to explore the outer expression of the Church as the Body of Christ in space and time. Our understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ is determinative for how we understand what the expression of the Church must look like.

Most of Torrance's publications are concerned with Christology and soteriology. However, the materials that he did publish concerning ecclesiology are the product of his in depth and direct involvement in the ecumenical movement with the World Council of Churches in the 1940'a and 1950's particularly the meetings that took place in Amsterdam (1948), Lund (1952), and Evanston (1954). It is now to this idea of unity and ecumenism that we turn.

III. THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

From 1939 until 1952, Theological Commissions with the World Council of Churches had been preparing theological research for discussion regarding the Church. In 1952 the *World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission* met together in Lund, Sweden in order that "the work of these groups of theologians could be laid before a body more fully representative of the Churches."[22] The hope of this meeting was to make advancements on discussions that previous commissions had already begun in the following two ways: First, they seek to "initiate a theological study of the biblical teaching about the relation between Christ and the Church."[23] Second, the hope is to have an impact on the problem of "unity of social, cultural, political, racial and other so-called 'non-theological' factors" as these were hardly mentioned at previous meetings.[24] Torrance summarizes their goal like this: "Our major

[22] World Conference on Faith and Order, World Council of Churches, and Commission on Faith and Order, eds., *Faith and Order; the Report of the Third World Conference at Lund, Sweden, August 15-18, 1952.* (London: SCM Press, 1952), 1.

[23] Ibid, 2.

[24] Ibid.

differences clearly concern the doctrine of the Church, but let us penetrate behind the divisions of the Church on earth to our common faith in the one Lord."[25]

A Christological ecclesiology must be the starting point if we are to have any hope for a united Church and it is this Christological ecclesiology that results in the pursuit of unity among churches within space and time. Torrance argues that what is needed is a "thorough-going Christological criticism of our differences in order to open up the way for reformation and reunion of the Church."[26] In this discussion of the unity of the Church, Torrance provides a helpful Christological lens through which to think about the unity of the Church by applying the doctrines of the hypostatic union and anhypostasia/ enhypostasia. I will elucidate these ideas in the next several paragraphs.

Traditionally the hypostatic union is used as a way to describe the humanity and divinity of Jesus united in the second person of the Trinity in which both are united without confusion and without division. The Chalcedonian formula is completely sufficient in speaking of the person of Jesus Christ in this way. But the hypostatic union is also critical in our understanding of atonement and the Church. As Torrance argues,

But when, on the other hand, we think of His mission in relation to sinful man, of His Incarnation as the incorporation of Himself into our body of the flesh of sin and the carrying of it to its crucifixion, when we think of His entry into our estrangement in the contradiction of sin, and of His working out, in the midst of our humanity and alienation, reconciliation with God, then the Chalcedonian formula does not say anout, for reconciliation is not something added to hypostatic union so much as the hypostatic union itself at work in expiation and atonement.[27]

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[25] Torrance, "Atonement and the Oneness of the Church." 245.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid, 247.

It is through the entire life and mission of Jesus that the hypostatic union works with what we understand as traditional soteriological terms such as reconciliation, incorporation, and atonement in order to gain for us redemption and new creation. It is through our actual ontological union with Him through *koinonia* that the Church "was given to participate in the hypostatic union, in the mystery of Christ."[28] Think of it this way, at His crucifixion Jesus, the One, was representing the Many. The doctrine of the Church is "the Many and the One."[29] The hypostatic union teaches us that Jesus Christ is *one* and as the Church is only the Church as it participates in Christ, it also participates in His *oneness*.

The second Christological doctrine that Torrance applies to ecclesiology is the conception of *anhypostasia* and *enhypostasia*. This doctrine of anhypostasia teaches us that in the assumption of flesh the human nature of Christ had no existence apart from the event of the Incarnation, "apart from hypostatic union."[30] The doctrine of enhypostasia teaches us that in the assumption of flesh the human nature of Christ was given a real and concrete existence within the Son. That is, within the hypostatic union. Through His entire life and ministry within our humanity Christ worked out the reconciliation of us to Himself through substitutionary atonement. In other words, incorporation and atonement are bound up with each other and thus, it is only in this way that the Church can participate in his death and resurrection. In the words of Torrance,

The only way that the Church can follow Him is by way of *anhypostasia*, by way of self-denial and crucifixion, by letting Christ take its place and displace its self-assertion; and by way of *enhypostasia*, by way of incorporation and

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[28] Ibid, 249.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

resurrection, by receiving from Christ the life which He has in Himself and which He gives His own.[31]

We can think of it in this way. The doctrine of anhypostasia means that the Church has no existence apart from our communion in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Again, the Church is only the Church *in Christ.* Enhypostasis argues that "the Church is given in Christ real *hypostasis* through incorporation, and therefore concrete function in union with Him"[32]

The unity of the Church comes from its incorporation in the person of Jesus Christ and participation in the hypostatic union of the Son. Anhypostasia tells us that the Church only finds its existence in Christ and enhypostasia tells us that the Church finds its own unique existence through that incorporation in Christ. "That is why to speak of the Church as the Body of Christ is no mere figure of speech but describes an ontological reality, enhypostatic in Christ and wholly dependent on Him."[33] The result of this method of doing ecclesiology must be pursuit of unity within the Church. This is why Torrance believes that if the World Council of Churches was to truly cut behind what divides us this Christological ecclesiology is "sound theological procedure."[34]

IV. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have done a very brief survey of Torrance's theological method and applied that to ecclesiology. By examining his ecclesiology we have seen what it looks like to truly wrestle with the question of "what is the Church," to truly wrestle with the Church as the early Church wrestled with the doctrine of Jesus Christ. For Torrance, faithful knowing is done in regards to the nature of the object that you are attempting to know. This *kata physin* model is

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[31] Ibid, 252.

[32] Ibid, 255.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid, 245.

important for beginning to wrestle with the doctrine of the Church. If we are to speak rightly concerning the Church then it is important that we understand the Church according to its nature. Much of modern ecclesiology is written for the purpose of helping to run a local church without taking into account what the Church is in its nature. This has lead the current trend in ecclesiology to focus primarily on what the Church does rather than beginning with what the Church is. Torrance's method should serve as a starting point for modern theologians to begin wrestling with the doctrine of the Church.

Torrance's doctrine of the Church helps to avoid the errors presented at the beginning of this paper. Namely, the displacement of Christ by man and the obscuring of Christ by the Church. Torrance's Christological ecclesiology provides a robust understanding of the Church which helps us in avoiding the idea that the life and mission of the Church is somehow able to be thought of in abstraction from the person of Jesus Christ. We *must* begin to wrestle with the doctrine of the Church as the doctrine of Christ has been wrestled with.

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