2020

Classical Trinitarian Theology and the Idolatry of Nationalism: The Doctrine of the Trinity as a Critique of Political Theology

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Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Shane Akerman as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religion.

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Abstract

Classical Trinitarian Theology and the Idolatry of Nationalism:
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This dissertation proposes that the doctrine of the Trinity, in the field of political theology today, should be taken as a critique of the idolatry of nationalism and should point us toward a new theological politics that is informed by the proper worship of the triune God, especially in the Church's sacred liturgy.

Existing proposals regarding the relation between trinitarian and political theology can be sorted into two basic camps, separated by alternative understandings of the meaning of political theology as primarily either descriptive or prescriptive. Representative of the descriptive sort is Agamben's genealogical analysis of the link between trinitarian *oikonomia* and modern bureaucracy and democracy; representative of the prescriptive sort is the correlation between *perichoresis* and egalitarian, participatory democracy described by social trinitarians. What these proposals treat, however, is not the doctrine of the Trinity in its traditional form, but a secularized or otherwise politicized version of the doctrine. In other words, they offer an account of trinitarian theology as determined by political theology, rather than an account of political theology as determined by trinitarian theology. Both proposals rush to link theology to politics, circumventing necessary mediations. Thus, their theological analysis suffers from thin conceptions of trinitarian theology, and their political analysis is left only to advocate for vague political values.

I argue that the task of political theology involves a "comparative phenomenology." Theology is operative not just in a political concept's history, but in its ongoing application. That is, modern political concepts are not merely derivative of older theological concepts, but remain deeply theological in themselves. Following also the methodology articulated by Clodovis Boff one must also say that political theology guides Christian political praxis in the light of Christian theology, serving as a mediating theory between theology proper and political praxis.

In light of this task, political theology is to be seen as residing at the intersection of two essential moments, which Boff describes as hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations. This dissertation proceeds along this route: First I offer a "hermeneutic mediation," by which the doctrine of the Trinity is articulated clearly in historical and dogmatic context. Second, I offer a "socio-analytic mediation," in which I determine that the "new nationalism" growing around the world in this early part of the twenty-first century is a determinative feature of contemporary politics. Trinitarian theology, therefore, must be brought to speak to this global resurgence of nationalism.

I argue that while theology is a discourse about the highest good, which is God, every political community must itself be oriented toward a good. Thus every theology implies a politics, and every politics contains a theology. The nation, therefore, functions as a "god" in the public theology of the nation-state, just as the Trinity is a description of the particular identity of the Christian God, and a summary of the Christian proclamation. Trinitarian theology thus stands in distinction to the implicit theology of the nation-state. Political theology, in light of the doctrine of the Trinity, offers a critique of the nation-

state as idolatrous and necessitates the creation of alternative political practices, shaped by the pedagogy of the Church, and oriented toward God as their highest end.

Because the doctrine of the Trinity articulates a particular vision of God as the highest good, and because it summarizes the whole Christian metanarrative, it itself conditions the creation of a new community—the Church—which lives according to *this* narrative and worships *this* God as its highest good. The doctrine of the Trinity therefore conditions all Christian politics. It is political in that it points toward a decidedly Christian politics.

Both the Church and the nation-state operate according to distinct theologies. While Christians are obliged to seek the welfare of the state in which they find themselves through cooperation with other non-Christians, the doctrine of the Trinity reminds the Church of her charge to also be distinct. A trinitarian political theology must be a distinctly Christian political theology, because the doctrine of the Trinity is not subject to any process of secularization. Following the lead of Erik Peterson, I argue that the Church is truly public (*öffentlich*), and manifests her truly political nature, in the celebration of the liturgy.

The Mass is the act of sacrifice that creates a new community of transnational solidarity, the Church. And the Mass is trinitarian at its core because it is truly the sacrifice of the Son, offered truly to the Father, by the power and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to the nation-state, whose sacrificial violence reinstantiates the borders, the sacrifice of Christ, "tears down the wall of separation," and makes one Body of all nations.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated, first and foremost, to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.

I have written this work under the spiritual patronage of our Lord's Holy Mother, Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, and the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas. Through them I dedicate it to the Order of Preachers. Among the Friars Preachers, I am especially indebted to Fr. Donald Bramble, OP, Fr. Michael Fones, OP, and all the friars of St. Dominic's Church in Eagle Rock, California, for their ongoing prayers and encouragement.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to Rev. Dr. Matthew Burdette, who is my most valued theological interlocutor and dearest friend. Together with him I will continue to pray and work for the unity of all Christians.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my professors who have helped to guide me along this journey of academic formation with excellence.

Firstly, I thank Dr. Anselm Min, my Chair and Advisor. I chose to study at Claremont Graduate University for the opportunity to work with Dr. Min because of his creative and valuable work in liberation theology in relation to a retrieval of Thomas Aquinas and the classical tradition. I am grateful to have learned so much from him and to have worked with him as a research assistant.

I thank Dr. Ingolf Dalferth who has also been a valued member of both my dissertation and examination committees. Dr. Dalferth's teaching has given me a theological breadth and depth for which I will always be grateful.

I thank Dr. Grace Kao, under whom I have had the privilege of studying from the beginning of my graduate education ten years ago. Dr. Kao has always been a source of excellent feedback in writing and has always been an encouragement to me by her confidence in my academic work.

I thank also the faculty of Claremont School of Theology who have so greatly shaped my intellectual and spiritual journey. I especially thank Dr. Richard Amesbury who introduced me to the field of political theology and Dr. Gregory J. Riley who first gave me insight into the classical understanding of trinitarian theology.

Finally, I thank the Religion faculty of La Sierra University, especially Dr. John Webster, Dr. Maury Jackson, and Dr. Wonil Kim. These have been more than professors but colleagues and friends.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Topic and Thesis

This dissertation proposes a description of the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. Existing proposals can be sorted into two basic camps, separated by alternative understandings of the meaning of political theology as primarily either descriptive or prescriptive. Representative of the descriptive sort is Agamben's genealogical analysis of the link between trinitarian *oikonomia* and modern bureaucracy and democracy; representative of the prescriptive sort is the correlation between *perichoresis* and egalitarian, participatory democracy described by social trinitarians. What these proposals treat, however, is not the doctrine of the Trinity in its traditional form, but a secularized or otherwise politicized version of the doctrine. In other words, they offer an account of trinitarian theology as determined by political theology, rather than an account of political theology as determined by trinitarian theology. Both proposals rush to link theology to politics, circumventing necessary mediations, both socio-analytic and hermeneutic. Thus, their theological analysis suffers from thin conceptions of trinitarian theology, and their political analysis is left only to advocate for vague political values.

In order to proceed, one must identify the precise relation between politics and theology. I argue that while theology is a discourse about the highest good, which is God, every political community must itself be oriented toward a good. Thus every theology implies a politics, and every politics contains a theology. The nation, therefore, functions as a "god" in the public theology of the nation-state, just as the Trinity is a description of the particular identity of the Christian God, and a summary of the Christian proclamation.

Trinitarian theology thus stands in distinction to the implicit theology of the nation-state. Political theology, in light of the doctrine of the Trinity, offers a critique of the nation-state as idolatrous and necessitates the creation of alternative political practices, shaped by the pedagogy of the Church, and oriented toward God as their highest end.

Methodological Significance

This dissertation engages in a critique of the field of political theology, showing that many political theologies, carried out by both believers and non-believers alike, employ methods that undermine the intrinsic relationship between theology and praxis. This project looks to reorient the task of political theology by grounding it in the theological significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. What is at stake is the very theological quality of political theology.[1]

Political theology, today, is a field of tremendous diversity. "Political theology" can refer to works as diverse as the postmodern secular theology of Crockett, Badiou, Žižek, et al; Radical Orthodoxy; contextual theologies of every sort; evangelical defenses of American exceptionalism; Latin American liberation theologies; and the classic European tradition of political theology as in the works of Metz or Moltmann. There is no common denominator or a shared understanding of what constitutes "the political" or "the theological."

It is necessary, therefore, to clarify at the outset what this dissertation is taking up when it takes up "political theology." First, political theology, as it is used in this dissertation, refers to *a mode of Christian theology intending Christian political praxis*. As members of a common society with non-Christians, such a theology must account for

those outside the Church, but the standards of truth to which such a theology is accountable are those that are justified from within the Christian tradition.

In my view, those works that today fall under the heading of political theology face the serious threat of irrelevancy from at least two sides. On the one hand, political theology may be insufficiently political. By this I mean it runs the risk of becoming detached from the real world and its concrete political situation. Such a political theology is able to deal only in abstractions—advocating "freedom" over "oppression," and "equality" over "hierarchy." But without authentic social analysis and reference to any concrete social praxis such terms ring hollow.

The other danger is equally real, namely, that a political theology be insufficiently theological. Here I refer to the tendency of political theologies to abandon traditional formulations of the faith in their haste to make theology "relevant." The problem with this has a major practical dimension. If political theology is to remain more than a scholastic exercise, and to actually foment some sort of political activity, then constructing a theology that is not already shared by the faithful undermines this cause. The power of political theology in the modern world comes only from the fact that it is able to appeal to the Church's deeply held beliefs and call on Christians who hold such beliefs to put them into action. Ensuring the authentically political and theological quality of political theology is what is meant by socio-analytic and hermeneutic mediation, respectively.

In this construal of the meaning of political theology I am most indebted to Clodovis Boff's text on political theological method, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*. Yet I also hope to synthesize this approach, representative

of the tradition of Latin American liberation theology, with more recent trends among theologians such as William Cavanaugh and John Milbank. These two streams of thought are often considered in sharp contrast but I hope to show that if their differences are considered a matter of emphasis then the two will not be held as mutually exclusive. For instance, the liberationist tradition will critique Milbank and others for ignoring the necessity of scientific social analysis. And this with good reason, as Milbank himself repudiates Clodovis Boff for relying on extra-Christian sources in constructing theology. Yet a closer examination of the Radical Orthodoxy tradition shows that social analysis is incorporated into this work, just of a different sort than in the liberationist tradition. Not unlike Juan Luis Segundo in *Faith and Ideologies*, Milbank, and others, are willing and able to incorporate certain "ideological," or pragmatic dimensions of, say, Marxism without accepting such a system's implicit "faith." Likewise, Milbank may take issue with the liberationists as if there is nothing particularly Christian about their praxis, but Jose Miguez Bonino, Clodovis Boff, and many other liberation theologians, are indeed advocating for *Christian* political praxis, even if this is not a point of emphasis.

It is my hope, therefore, to bring these methodological streams together by crafting a political theology that at once emphasizes Christian particularity and the need for intentionally Christian political praxis, while also being grounded in social analysis that goes beyond the competency of Christian theologians *qua* theologians.

Literature Review

Many have already addressed the supposed political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. This work will no doubt fit alongside these other attempts, as an alternative

solution to the problem. The most prominent of these works with which I will engage include Giorgio Agamben's *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Jürgen Moltmann's *Trinity and the Kingdom*, Leonardo Boff's *Trinity and Society*, Miroslav Volf's essay, "The Trinity is our Social Program," and Erik Peterson's essay, "Monotheism as Political Problem."

Agamben's work explores the genealogy of modern governmentality and locates, at its root, the notion of trinitarian *oikonomia*. He is quick to note that what is being described is not a causal relationship between theology and politics, but the uncovering of a systematic analogy that allows us to shed light on modern structures by seeing in trinitarian *oikonomia* the mechanism of the modern Western state in its "paradigmatic form."[2] Thus, for Agamben, contemporary democracies with their bureaucratic structures symbolized by the "empty throne" are the political inheritors of the ancient doctrine of the Trinity.

Moltmann's construction of a trinitarian theology begins with the notion of God's suffering love as its core principle. After spending several chapters outlining the perfect love shared between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Moltmann launches into a critique of monarchy. The sacral monarch claims to be a representative of God and an imitator of God's authority, but in light of the doctrine of the Trinity, it is instead the "community of men and women, without privileges and without subjugation," that corresponds to the triune God.[3]

Leonardo Boff follows a similar trajectory as he emphasizes plurality in God, claiming, "The fact that God is triune means unity in diversity."[4] With this understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity in hand, it is natural for Boff to extend the argument with the assertion that faith in the Trinity means a critique of social inequalities. The church,

"built on the model of the Trinity" forms itself as a network of loving communities, and can thereby resist the hierarchical, authoritarian structures of the State, which are reflective of an absolute monotheism.[5]

Miroslav Volf astutely notes that the doctrine of the Trinity has been, but should *not* be, merely mined for "abstract principles" with which to "construct images of human community."[6] Nevertheless, Volf still wants to argue for an anthropology grounded in a trinitarian account of personhood. His modification to preceding proposals in social trinitarian doctrine amounts to a recognition that humans cannot imitate the perfect intra-trinitarian love, but instead participate in God's unilateral act of self-giving love.[7]

Finally, Erik Peterson offers a third way between the various social trinitarianisms and a purely genealogical approach to the question of the doctrine of the Trinity's political significance. Peterson, like many of the others, notes the mutually beneficial nature of the relationship between absolute monotheism and an absolute political sovereign. However, he understands the impact of trinitarian theology on the landscape of Roman political theology to be that the triune God marks the point of impossibility for any creaturely imitation of God. The sacral monarch does not stand for God's sovereignty, but neither does an egalitarian democracy stand for the equality of divine Persons. The radical political implication of the doctrine of the Trinity, in this schema, is the relativization and subordination of all lordships to the one true lordship of the triune God.

This dissertation looks to expand Peterson's basic claim in two directions. First, the historic and dogmatic function of the doctrine of the Trinity must be considered in more serious detail. This is necessary in order to ensure that the description of trinitarianism is

in keeping with the tradition and not merely an *ad hoc* reworking of trinitarian concepts in an attempt to politicize them. Secondly, the application of theological concepts to the political realm must be done in the light of contemporary social analysis. While political *strategy* is not the task of the political theologian, it is nevertheless necessary to give an account of contemporary society, in order that the theologian might speak to the actual needs of the world, and to point toward viable forms of praxis.

Chapter Summaries

Part I (chapters one and two) defines two approaches to political theology and shows how the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity has been described in each. I argue that in both cases the doctrine of the Trinity is betrayed by being treated abstractly, in isolation from the historical proclamation of the Church. Instead it is dealt with in some "secularized" or "politicized" form.

Part II (chapters three through six) argues for the need for hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediation in political theology. These specific mediations are then explored in relation to a trinitarian political theology: first, by an examination of the doctrine of the Trinity in its historical and dogmatic context, and second, by an analysis of the current political situation, focusing specifically on the role of the nation-state in a globalizing world. Finally, these two moments are brought together, as I point toward the possible directions for a trinitarian political theology. Here I suggest that the doctrine of the Trinity offers a critique of the nation-state as idolatrous and necessitates the creation of alternative political practices, shaped by the pedagogy of the Church, and oriented toward God as their highest end.

Chapter One- The Trinity as Political Analogy

Chapter one argues that the Schmittian approach to political theology, as carried out by Agamben, while appropriate to its own descriptive task, cannot itself inform the political praxis of the believer. The genealogy presented does not describe the political application of trinitarian theology, but a history of the distortion and misappropriation of theology.

I begin the chapter by interpreting Carl Schmitt's work in *Political Theology*, seeking to identify his understanding of the nature and task of political theology. According to Schmitt, "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts."[8] For example, the rule of the one God finds a systematic analogy in the rule of the sole political sovereign. The work of political theology, therefore, uncovers a relationship between modern political concepts and their theological antecedents. Regardless of the normative elements within Schmitt's system, it is to be especially noted here that his approach to political theology is more descriptive than prescriptive.

Schmitt, for his part, only briefly addresses the potential import of the doctrine of the Trinity in political theology. Therefore I turn to the work of Giorgio Agamben who follows Schmitt's program but asks precisely this genealogical question in *The Kingdom and The Glory*. Against Schmitt, Agamben identifies *oikonomia* (taken from the early trinitarian theologians) rather than sovereignty as the central theological concept to be secularized in the modern theory of the state, because what we find in the modern state is

a managerial bureaucracy that is literally "economic"—as in the *nomos* (law) of the *oikos* (household).

However, even if Agamben is more or less correct in his description of the genealogy from trinitarian *oikonomia* to modern bureaucratic democracy, the question of the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity for believers remains unanswered. The believer cannot be satisfied with the merely descriptive account as it is unable to address the actual relation between living Christian theology and contemporary political praxis. For Agamben and Schmitt are *not* dealing with theological concepts as they are held by the faithful, but precisely *secularized* theological concepts. The doctrine of the Trinity, in a secularized form, may lead to all sorts of political consequences, but this sort of political theology cannot truly inform Christian political praxis because it is not derived from Christian theology. For the doctrine of the Trinity in a secularized form is no longer the doctrine of the Trinity. The pressing question, which Schmitt and Agamben never intended to answer, is what political consequences the doctrine of the Trinity has *in itself*, as it has been proclaimed by the Church. In other words, Schmitt and his school offer insightful social analysis, but, for the sake of Christian political praxis, are insufficiently grounded in the tradition of Christian theology.

Chapter Two- The Trinity as Political Program

Chapter two argues that the post-Schmittian, new political theology (more prescriptive than descriptive) cannot express the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity either, because it falsely imagines that theology can be immediately translated into a prescriptive agenda for a political program. These political theologies lack the

necessary hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations, and thus distort the meaning of trinitarian doctrine and are left with naive recommendations for political praxis.

I begin the chapter by looking at recent, progressive attempts to revive the work of the conservative theorist Carl Schmitt. It is these that I refer to as "post-Schmittian" political theologians. Examples include Slavoj Žižek, Clayton Crockett, Bonnie Honig, Regina Schwartz, and others. The "new" political theology follows Schmitt in identifying the relationship between absolute divine sovereignty and absolute political sovereignty. But, unlike Schmitt, these progressive thinkers aim to undermine rather than legitimize a totalitarian political system. They resource elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition (or deliberately break with this tradition) in order to produce a theology that is more dialogical and less authoritarian. The break with Schmitt is clear. Whereas Schmitt's task was ultimately descriptive, these progressives believe that their theological constructions can function *prescriptively* to undermine the consolidation of power in the modern state. However, as Paul Kahn points out, this represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Schmitt, insofar as they mistake Schmitt's analysis of a systematic analogy between political and theological concepts, for some kind of causal relation.

Many theologians, including Jürgen Moltmann, Leonardo Boff, and Miroslav Volf, have identified the doctrine of the Trinity as that element within theology that undermines any attempt to consolidate power because the triune God exercises sovereignty as three co-equal Persons. The perichoretic love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit becomes a model for socio-political communities to imitate.

I hope to show that what is lacking in the post-Schmittian, social trinitarian approach is two-fold. They lack what Clodovis Boff describes as the necessary

hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations. These categories are to be explored in further detail in chapter three. In terms of a critique of the social trinitarians however, we can note these two specific shortcomings.

First, on a theological level, the doctrine of the Trinity is constructed in such a way as to incline it toward having some social or political significance. In the end, themes such as community, equality, personality, and suffering are over-emphasized, distorting the role of the doctrine in its historic and systematic contexts. I argue that social trinitarianism is especially problematic in its departure from a more classical articulation of the doctrine because it has a tendency to abandon essential divine attributes such as simplicity, immutability, and impassibility. Despite the apparent gains of such a theology, God is ultimately reduced to "a being," or worse—in this case—*three* beings.

Second, on a socio-analytic level, the social trinitarians are left only to advocate for vague and impracticable social values, none of which are in anyway dependent upon faith or participation in the triune God. Trinitarian theology is infused with communitarian values, and then those values are extracted from the doctrine, as if something new were being discovered. Such a theological method tells us next to nothing about the theological topic under consideration, and everything about the theologian. And its approach to both politics and theology is grossly ahistorical.

Chapter Three- Political Theological Method

Chapter three outlines a political theological method that incorporates the valuable insights from both the Schmittian and liberationist tradition. The task of

Christian political theology, therefore, is multifaceted: (1) analyzing the implicit theology already at work in political society (Schmitt) and (2) guiding Christian political praxis in the light of Christian theology, serving as a mediating theory between Christian theology and Christian political praxis (C. Boff, Segundo). In this latter function, political theology must employ social analysis in order to discern the needs of society as a guide for the formation of political praxis.

In this chapter I begin by elaborating on George Lindbeck's "post-liberal" approach to doctrine as a regulation of grammar within a given cultural-linguistic system. However, unlike Lindbeck, but with John Milbank and others, I reject any dichotomization between the doctrine of the Trinity as grammatical rule and the doctrine of the Trinity as an account of God's being. The former does not exclude the latter.

If this revised post-liberal approach to doctrine is granted then new avenues for political theology are available. Every socio-political community is held together by a certain meta-narrative and is thus regulated by a certain set of grammatical rules. Thus the theologian can engage in a narrative-critical comparison of theological communities (like the Church) and political communities (like the nation-state) because they have this formal cultural-linguistic structure in common. Theology offers a culturally mediated metanarrative and sets the boundaries for a community's discourse about the highest end and common good, called God. Because politics is always oriented toward some highest end or common good, it therefore always requires some sort of theology. Theology is always political and politics always theological without reducing one to the other.

The task of political theology, in this more-or-less Schmittian mode, involves a "comparative phenomenology," as we see in the recent works of William Cavanaugh and

Paul Kahn. These theorists are able to see theology as operative not just in a political concept's *history*, but in its ongoing *application*. That is, modern political concepts are not merely derivative of older theological concepts, but remain deeply theological in themselves. But uncovering this implicit theology at work in the state is not political theology's only task.

Following also the methodologies articulated in the tradition of Latin American liberation theology by Clodovis Boff and Juan Luis Segundo, one must also say that political theology must guide Christian political praxis in the light of Christian theology, serving as a mediating theory between theology proper and political praxis. In light of this task, political theology is to be seen as residing at the intersection of two essential moments, which Boff describes as hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations. Boff describes political theology as consisting of form and matter, where the theological content provides the form, and the political content provides the matter.

Hermeneutic mediation, therefore, refers to a sophisticated interpretation of Christian doctrine—the preparation of the theological *form*, which is to confront the contemporary political situation. Socio-analytic mediation refers to a scientific and concrete analysis of that contemporary political situation. This is the raw data that theology must address, but theology, as theology, cannot prepare or analyze this content. Thus political theology serves as a mediating theory between theological hermeneutics and social analysis.

Chapter Four- The Doctrine of the Trinity in Historical and Dogmatic Context

Chapter four takes up the task of establishing a substantive articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity that is faithful to its historical expression and its role within systematic theology. I specifically focus on the history of the use of the psychological analogy for the Trinity. The first half of this chapter offers a survey of Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers, especially Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas with respect to the development of trinitarian theology. Only as the doctrine is treated with this sensitivity can it then be brought meaningfully into discussion with questions of political significance.

It is also crucial, however, to show that the psychological analogy is still a viable model for understanding the Trinity. So, in the second half of this chapter I explore the trinitarian theology of Bernard Lonergan and his revival of the psychological analogy. In it one finds a "four-point hypothesis" of trinitarian theology. Lonergan claims that there are four created participations in the four relations of the inter-trinitarian life. These four relations are paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration; and these correspond to the supernatural realities of the Incarnation, the beatific vision, sanctifying grace, and the habit of charity. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity is not merely one doctrine along side others (pneumatology, Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, etc.) but is in fact a particular way of organizing and relating each of these doctrines. In the political realm, therefore, far from being subordinated to some other "meaning structure" of a political community, the doctrine of the Trinity is itself the meaning structure of an alternative community—the Church.

Chapter Five- Today's Social Context

In chapter five, having already offered the necessary hermeneutic mediation by treating the doctrine of the Trinity with historical and systematic sensitivity, I turn to socio-analytic mediation. Here I explore recent works in social analysis that deal specifically with the meaning of nationalism, uncovering how it operates on a sociological level, and its impact on the contemporary political landscape.

The analysis of Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle in *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation* focuses on American nationalism and the use of violence to constantly renew and refresh the national identity, which is embodied in the flag—a sacred totem. Building on Émile Durkheim's notion of totemism, Marvin and Ingle analyze American nationalism through the lens of a ritualized system of sacrifice. In war, the nation is engaged in a literal ritual of blood-sacrifice. This understanding helps us see the nation as a sacred community. This is in perfect continuity with Benedict Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities*.

Anderson offers a critical history of the origins of nationalism and elucidates the historical developments that allowed for the replacement of religious solidarity with national solidarity. The emergence of print-capitalism created cohesive groups that were at once more expansive than local vernaculars yet more local than Latin. Along with this came a permanency to language that "helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation."[9] This, combined with the upheaval brought to Europe by the proliferation of religious groups after the Protestant Reformation, caused these national groups to appear as more stable grounds for solidarity than "religious" communities. This psychological dimension of nationalism is a crucial component of

modern social analysis, because, as Anderson's thesis demonstrates: nationalism is not a "real" community—simply there in the natural world—but is *imagined* into existence.

It may seem as though the relevance of nationalism in contemporary social analysis is diminishing, as the power of the nation-state is waning under the forces of economic, political, and cultural globalization. However, with the help of Wendy Brown and Margaret Somers, I intend to show that the opposite is in fact the case. While it is true that the authority of the individual nation-state is relativized on the global stage, what these recent theorists show is that the cultural impact of nationalism is only increased. Brown illustrates this point poignantly in her work *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* where she analyzes the phenomenon of building walls to secure national identity. These walls are ultimately not successful in their proposed material goals (of keeping people out) but serve a deeper ideological function of reinforcing national identity in times of collective-existential anxiety. Somers analysis in *Genealogies of Citizenship* supplements this work quite well, as she shows how national identity is granted to citizens as a kind of symbolic compensation for the loss of rights. The "state" no longer delivers on its promise of protection from violence and exploitation, but cultural participation in "the nation" allows citizens to continue to see value in participation in the nation-state. In light of recent activities on the political stage, including Brexit, and the election of Donald Trump, such an analysis is only reaffirmed in its pertinence.

Finally, in light of these theoretical considerations, one is able to see how the persistence of nationalism is complicit in environmental degradation, as economic competition between nations encourages a disregard for environmental care; ongoing

wars of imperialism are justified on the basis of national interest and security; nationalist solidarities undermine transnational workers movements, thereby perpetuating global economic exploitation; and the current refugee crises is caused by the prioritization of national self-interest over humanity's common good. It is clear from all of this that humanity is in desperate need of a new locus of solidarity that can transcend the horizon of nationalism and its collective narcissism.[10]

Chapter Six- Politics in the Light of the Triune God

Having considered the necessary hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations, the sixth and final chapter explores the two different functions that a political theology, rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity, can serve in the context of the modern nation-state. The chapter begins by arguing that the doctrine of the Trinity uniquely undermines any attempt at abstractly or immediately applying theology to politics. According to Erik Peterson, this is because the Trinity (in contrast to the god of radical monotheism) cannot correspond to any earthly political power; it therefore cannot be used as an ideological justification for any temporal political system. In his essay, "Monotheism as a Political Problem," he traces in fascinating detail the relationship between monotheism and the imperial power. He shows that many ancient Christians, like Eusebius, used the analogy between God and the emperor as a theological justification of Roman power. The Empire, therefore, had an interest in supporting Arianism in order to safeguard the "political theology" of the Empire. Trinitarianism disrupted this harmonious relationship between theology and politics because no emperor, no oligarchy, no created power whatsoever, can correspond to or represent the mystery of the triune God. The reign of

the Holy Trinity is just that, and nothing more beside. Thus Peterson claims that the Trinity marks the point of impossibility for any political theology—presuming that by "political theology" Peterson refers to a system of analogy or correlation between theological truths and political power, in which the former legitimizes the latter.

However, because the doctrine of the Trinity articulates a particular vision of God as the highest good, and because it summarizes the whole Christian metanarrative, it itself conditions the creation of a new community—the Church—which lives according to *this* narrative and worships *this* God as its highest good. Far from being apolitical, the doctrine of the Trinity conditions all Christian politics. As Peterson writes, "For Christians, political involvement can never take place except under the presumption of faith in the triune God."[11] The doctrine of the Trinity is political, but only in that it points toward a decidedly Christian politics.

Both the Church and the nation-state operate according to distinct theologies. So, while Christians are obliged to seek the welfare of the state in which they find themselves through cooperation with other non-Christians, the doctrine of the Trinity reminds the Church of its charge to also to be distinct. A trinitarian political theology must be a distinctly Christian political theology, because the doctrine of Trinity is not subject to any process of secularization. Following the lead of Erik Peterson, I argue that the Church is truly public (*öffentlich*), truly political, in the celebration of the liturgy.

The Mass is the act of sacrifice that creates a new community of transnational solidarity, the Church. And the Mass is trinitarian at its core because it is truly the sacrifice of the Son, offered truly to the Father, by the power and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to the nation-state, whose sacrificial violence reinstantiates the borders,

the sacrifice of Christ, "tears down the wall of separation," and makes one Body of all nations.[12]

Practically, the Church is therefore called to direct action to work against the nation-state's undermining of universal human dignity. I look specifically at four areas where the Church can be called to action in light of its calling as a political body: war, immigration, climate change, and labor. In contrast to the practices of the state, the Church, as the sacrament of salvation in the world, can take specific political action that is oriented toward God as the highest end, combatting the collective narcissism of nationalism. Nationalist political practices must hold the self-preservation of the nation as its highest end, but Christian political practice is not self-serving in this way. Christian political praxis is not about sectarianism or clericalism, but allowing a thematic orientation toward the triune God to shape and inform practices that support human dignity and solidarity.

PART I

THE TRINITY IN RECENT POLITICAL THEOLOGIES

CHAPTER ONE

THE TRINITY AS POLITICAL ANALOGY

Introduction

The central question of that this dissertation intends to answer is: What is the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and political theology? What difference does God's triune nature make, if any, to the work of political theology? In order to address this, it is first necessary to clarify what is meant by "political theology" and what its aims and methods are. This and the following chapter will present two different understandings of the meaning and task of political theology. In these two chapters I will discuss the two different approaches to political theology as well as provide an example of how the doctrine of the Trinity has been used within that system.

The primary distinction I draw between what I am terming Schmittian and post-Schmittian political theology is primarily one of description versus prescription. Carl Schmitt sets out to describe a genealogy of ideas, and uncover a correlation between politics and metaphysics. Many of his successors, on the other hand, think that theology can serve almost directly as models for political thought or action. And so, others have used the terms "genealogical" versus "exemplary" to distinguish between these two methods.[13] This first chapter will treat the (Schmittian) descriptive, or genealogical, method, and in the following chapter I will address the (post-Schmittian) prescriptive, or exemplary, method.

Therefore, the structure of this chapter will be two-fold. The first mode of political theology, which I will describe in this chapter, is the work of early twentieth-

century German political theorist Carl Schmitt.[14] In the second part, I will examine the work of contemporary philosopher Giorgio Agamben on the Trinity as an example of the application of a Schmittian mode of political theology to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Besides offering a general overview of Schmittian political theology, and providing an example of what I take to be a Schmittian application of the doctrine of the Trinity to political theology, this chapter also offers one major critique. In short, I believe that the Schmittian mode of political theology is inadequate to offer a sufficient answer to the importance of trinitarianism for political theology, because Schmitt's political theological method relies on a process of secularization. Schmitt's method analyzes, quite helpfully in some cases, how a political concept bears resemblance to or even relies upon a theological concept. But this process of secularization strips theological ideas of their context and complexity and reduces them to two-dimensional patterns that political systems can then appropriate. Far from being able to explain politics in the light of the Trinity, Schmittian political theology can only describe politics in its shadow. Something of a triadic structure may be borrowed, something of "economic" relations might find an analogy, but this does not answer the more normative question of what impact trinitarianism could or *should* have upon the work of political theology. By virtue of the nature of Schmitt's method, it is simply unable to answer the pressing question of Christian political praxis.

Schmittian Political Theology

Political Theology

The name "political theology" is so widespread, and its meaning so varied, as to

make it almost unusable as a discreet category. What qualifies something as theological or as political is virtually never clarified. Therefore, no one is in a position to appeal to any consensus view of what counts as real political theology. We are left only to assert and then defend a given definition. What I offer as a definition of political theology, therefore, is *a mode of Christian theology intending Christian political praxis*. I fully recognize that this is not a given, and is by no means a consensus definition. But such a definition is useful because it clarifies that the concern of this project is oriented towards praxis. Political theology, in my view, has an obligation to synthesize dogmatic theology and social analysis, both conducted with rigor and relative autonomy.

To survey other forms of political theology, therefore, would be an almost endless task. So, for the sake of clarity, allow me to articulate the parameters of my discussion: By theology I generally refer to Christian theology, and by political praxis, I generally refer to an engagement in the world of contemporary politics, but not in such a way that reduces "politics" to elections or statecraft. Within such boundaries it is logical to begin with the work of Carl Schmitt whose ideas have shaped the conversation on political theology for the past century.

The crucial thesis statement of Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology*, first published in 1922, is by now well known: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts."[15] This refers, quite obviously, to an historical development of concepts, from theological to political, but perhaps more significantly, it refers as well to an enduring analogical relationship between theological and political concepts. The thesis claim alone, which is often quoted and commented upon in isolation, could lead one to assume that Schmitt's primary concern is with historical relations

between concepts. Yet this is not the case, as Schmitt commentator, Paul Kahn, notes, "Political theology as a form of inquiry is compelling only to the degree that it helps us recognize that our political practices *remain embedded* in forms of belief and practice that touch upon the sacred."[16]

In the opening pages of Schmitt's chapter, "Political Theology," there is an emphasis on the analogical relationship between politics and theology, which must be construed as "conceptually clear," and "systematic," in contrast to "that kind of playing with ideas . . . which . . . yields colorful symbols and pictures."[17] Much of what has gone by the name of political theology, after Schmitt, certainly falls under this latter description—a mere playing with ideas. Schmitt's method, by contrast, is quite precise and fruitful, though limited, in its investigations. It is an account of this method that this chapter aims to provide.

The concept that occupies most of Schmitt's attention, both in this work and in others, is that of sovereignty—as the book's own subtitle indicates. And the work itself opens with this now famous line: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception."[18] This exceptional case, or state of exception, refers to a moment of crisis in which the norms of ordinary law are suspended. Because it is truly an exception to the ordinary, the conditions for an exceptional situation cannot be determined by the legal code. The legal code is precisely what is being suspended.[19] What is required is a *person* who can make a *decision*—and this is what constitutes the nature of sovereignty. The inevitable occurrence of such emergency situations renders the liberal constitutional system of government totally inadequate, because here is a system that tries to account for all situations in terms of legal formulae and prescribed norms. Liberal constitutional

government is an attempt to convert the power of the state into a kind of machine that generates justice through legal and political structures. But an "exceptionless" political entity is a naïve fantasy. Unforeseeable emergencies will arise and in those moments a sovereign decision maker will be necessary.

Perhaps most importantly, Schmitt recognizes that the possibility of eliminating the "extreme exception" is itself a philosophical and ultimately metaphysical question, not a juristic one.[20] For to answer the question of whether there can be an exceptionless political or legal system is obviously not an empirical one to be determined by social analysis. (As if we could search through history to see if there is or ever has been a political system that operates flawlessly according to predetermined procedures and thereby produces a just society.) Schmitt's assertion is more akin to a theological one, such as that all human beings are born in sin. This is not posited on the basis of an empirical observation and a quantitative analysis of children who are born; it is the fruit of a certain metaphysical understanding of human nature. We must clearly recognize that Schmitt's political comments on political theology are a sort of political philosophy, not a political science.

Here we begin to uncover the working out of the Schmittian political theological method. The political "state of exception," by way of political-theological analysis is understood as corresponding to the theological concept of "miracle." Schmitt writes: "The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology."[21] And the parallel is quite clear. Just as a miracle is understood as the divine suspension of the ordinary laws of nature, so also the state of exception is the sovereign suspension of the ordinary legal system. In both cases the suspension of law ultimately serves the purpose

of the preservation of justice and order. God may contravene the laws of nature in order to bless or to curse, in order to send healing or a plague, but in either case it is for his own righteous purpose. Similarly, the sovereign may intervene in the legal order to grant clemency or to inflict extralegal punishment, but in either case it is for the good of the state. God works outside nature to preserve nature; the sovereign works outside of the law in order to preserve the law.

As stated at the outset, however, it is important to remember that the relationship between these political and theological concepts is not strictly one of causality. And so the movement from the theological to the political is not conscious or intentional. This method does not give us precise historical data regarding how these political concepts came to be. It does, however, give insight into the lasting implications and consequences of these *secularized* politico-theological concepts.[22]

The Founding of the Liberal Order

Let us consider Schmitt's political theological method by understanding an example of his work. The ongoing question of the legitimation (or lack thereof) for contemporary liberal, democratic political movements has led to a resurgence of interest in Schmitt's writings. The light that his work shines on the question of the foundation of political power will be a helpful example of what his political theology entails.[23]

Schmitt unravels the mystery of the founding of the legal order itself by his attention to the state of exception. Just as Thomas Aquinas will argue for the existence of God from the premise that nothing can be its own cause, so also we might say that no political order, democratic or otherwise, can found itself.[24] For who is it that could have

established the laws of nature, except one who is beyond nature? Likewise, who is it that could have established legal order, except one who is beyond the law? The creation of the natural must be grounded in the *supernatural*. Likewise, what is legal is grounded in the "superlegal"—that which is beyond the law, not contrary to it (illegal) but unbound by it. In other words, God's greatest miracle is the act of *creatio ex nihilo* and, by analogy, the greatest "state of exception" is the foundation of the political order as such.

Schmitt's work on the foundation of political power raises crucial questions about the nature and task of liberal democratic politics. For here we encounter a paradox of legitimation, because the liberal project seeks to establish a law without a sovereign lawgiver. Jean-Jacques Rousseau recognized this problem: that if the law that governs the people emerges from the people themselves, it cannot carry the necessary authoritative weight to govern them. It is the law itself that converts the unruly, discordant multitude into "the people." The latter is able to govern itself, the former is not. Rousseau therefore posits a primordial lawgiver.[25]

However, it is not enough for the lawgiver to have existed once upon a time. New situations arise, situations of emergency occur. The legitimacy of the law requires a living voice of authority for it to receive a definitive application.[26] Rousseau's lawgiver, as Seyla Benhabib puts it, "trades off legitimacy. . . for rationality."[27] The law that the lawgiver imparts is a violent imposition of a certain will that excludes some (of the multitude) in order to form the people, the *demos*.

Take the American Revolution as an example. Here one encounters a national coming-to-consciousness. A people are born. But in order to fight for the cause of self-governance there must first be a defining of the "national" self. Who exactly is it that will

be included in this "We the People…"? Before the *demos* can rule, the very identity of the *demos* must be asserted by force. For there is no pre-existent *demos* that can properly arbitrate who is a part of the nation and who is not. The members of a democracy cannot be determined democratically.

"The lawgiver may get the law really right but he enables the people's self-governance by compromising their autonomy."[28] Schmitt's anti-liberal democracy recognizes that this kind of violence is the only way of escape from the paradox of politics.[29] Because the paradox constantly returns the lawgiver would only be a real solution (and not just a shifting of the problem) if the lawgiver constantly re-emerged to decide what was the general will. The obvious problem with this line of thinking is that the very notion of democracy begins to slip away. And this is in perfect parallel to the classical understanding of the divine creation, which was not just a once-upon-a-time event, but is an ongoing work. For the classical theological tradition, creation refers not to an event, but to an ongoing relationship of ontological dependence of the creature upon the Creator. By this analogy, a political order that is *founded* on a sovereign will, must also need the constant work of the sovereign to maintain the order that has been established. Thus Schmitt's critique of democracy and opposition to liberalism can be understood clearly by understanding his political-theological analysis of the nature of the law.[30]

One crucial interpretive question, which must be addressed, is whether or not Schmitt understands his own work in *Political Theology* to be an active intervention into the field of politics in the name of theology. In other words, does Schmitt believe that theological claims can be used to justify or support a contemporary political ideology?

He refers to those conservative, counter-revolutionary theists who attempted "to support the personal sovereignty of the monarch ideologically, with the aid of analogies from a theistic theology."[31] Is Schmitt himself up to something similar? It seems not. Rather, Schmitt's reference to the counter-revolutionary theists is a mere example of the *reciprocal* relationship between political and theological concepts. The relationship between political and theological concepts, described by political theology, is explicitly *not* a causal one, in either direction. Schmitt sets himself against both idealists and materialists who want to reduce the movements of history to one or the other of these two poles.

> Both the spiritualist explanation of material processes and the materialist explanation of spiritual phenomena seek causal relations. At first they construct a contrast between two spheres, and then they dissolve this contrast into nothing by reducing one to the other. This method must necessarily culminate in a caricature.[32]

Therefore, it is not that changes in politics *cause* changes in theology, or vice versa. But rather, the two sides operate in a dynamic and mutually affective way, progressing together, always caught in an analogical relation to the other.[33]

Schmitt contrasts his own method with one potentially more popular, which would be "oriented to immediate practical interest."[34] If it is believed that theological or metaphysical claims cause shifts in political thinking, then we can affect the political apparatus of the modern state by pulling on the levers of metaphysics and theology. But this is not Schmitt's concern. His interests in political theology are not immediately practical as he rejects a causal relation between theological and political concepts.

His own political theological method, which he refers to as the "sociology of

concepts" is described this way: "It aims to discover the basic, radically systematic structure and to compare this conceptual structure with the conceptually represented social structure of a certain epoch."[35] For instance, he writes that to claim merely that the seventeenth century monarch is "'mirrored' in the Cartesian concept of God," is to fall back into simple causal thinking. It is not as if the Cartesian concept of God is simply a mirrored image, a superstructure floating above the so-called reality of monarchy. "But it is a sociology of the concept of sovereignty when the historical-political status of the monarchy of the epoch is shown to correspond to the general state of consciousness that was characteristic of western Europeans at that time."[36]

One weakness of Schmitt's original treatment of political theology is that it dealt with theology only in the broadest and most general terms. The "God" referenced in Schmittian political theology is merely an archetype, an idea. It is not the concrete God of any particular faith or tradition. In *Political Theology II*, Carl Schmitt responds to these sorts of criticisms from his contemporary interlocutor Erik Peterson and further develops his understanding of political theology. In the sequel to Schmitt's original work, there is more done to develop a political *Christology*, which attempts to legitimize Schmitt's work as authentically theological and not merely borrowing theological categories.

As an example, he deals in *Political Theology II* with the opposition of *law* and *gospel* or, better, "lawfulness" and "righteousness." This Pauline distinction between the law and righteousness by faith is translated into the political world as the distinction between legality and legitimacy. "Legality is the logical result of the function of a state bureaucracy. … Legitimacy would carry with it a vast contraband of old concepts and transpositions which could include traditions, customs, fatherhood and the necromancy of

the old."[37] In other words, legitimacy is linked with a notion of *faith*, a non-quantifiable, subjective assessment of *ought* that cannot be subjected to or scrutinized by the written law. The righteousness of legitimacy transcends that of mere legality because it is human. The law is cold. It is a dead letter, written in stone. Legitimacy, however, is purchased with the acclaim of the people.

Employing more specifically Christian categories, *Political Theology II* returns to the center of Schmitt's political theology—the distinction between the attempted legalism of the liberal state and the need for a human element, a sovereign. It can now be said to be distinctly Christian, as well as Catholic. The liberal desire to reduce all politics to law is the politicization, or secularization, of the Protestant impulse to reduce revelation to Scripture.[38]

Schmitt's Political Theology Today

Before going any further, one may justifiably ask if Schmitt's thesis still holds. Has our politics broken with our metaphysics? In a secular world, a post-metaphysical world, can Schmitt's method still produce any insight? Is it still true that every significant concept of the modern state is a secularized theological concept? I would argue that, while limited, Schmitt's method is still valid. And the work of political theorist Paul Kahn has wonderfully updated and reapplied Schmitt's method to the contemporary political landscape.

Schmitt's awareness of the *ongoing* interdependent relation between political and theological concepts is, in part, a response to those theorists of the state for whom "metaphysics" or "theology" are polemical terms. For instance, Schmitt cites Albert

Hänel, for whom the demand that "all functions of the state [be unified] in one organ" is critiqued as "metaphysical."[39] What Hänel seems to mean by this polemical accusation of "metaphysics" is that those who insist on the absolute unity of the state and its functions are stuck thinking in terms of the state as an imitation of the one god. If Schmitt's thesis regarding political theology holds, however, then theological or metaphysical analogies can no longer be dismissed as anachronistic. For even now in the modern state, we have yet to escape the political-theological.

Secular liberals and advocates of democracy may have thought that they had escaped from the need for theological thinking about politics, unlike their monarchist counterparts. Yet, what Schmitt's sociology of concepts shows is that the liberal democratic state is no less intertwined with the metaphysical presuppositions of its own epoch than the rest. One need not agree either with Schmitt's metaphysics or his politics to still acknowledge the insight to be gained by his political-theological method. An example of one such contemporary ally is Paul Kahn who has written extensively on Schmitt's approach to political theology.

Kahn, in his commentary on Schmitt's *Political Theology*, observes the importance of a lack of a conclusion in Schmitt's original work. The work cannot be given a conclusion, in part, because "[p]olitical theology rests on an experience beyond discourse. It rests on faith, not argument."[40] Schmittian political theology opens our eyes to the subjective dimension within politics. In that way, if Schmitt is defending anything, it is freedom, even if, as in Schmitt's own case, that freedom includes a freedom to be evil. But liberalism, by trying to subject all of politics to reason and discourse, turns politics into a blind mechanism devoid of a sovereign—devoid of a truly free subject.

Thus, Kahn writes, "An authentic *political* theory must be one that simply stops. There can be no conclusion; there is only a pointing beyond to that which theory cannot express."[41] This is the nature of the political, properly speaking, because the political is about decision, not just the application of a rule.

Schmitt's critique of liberalism is therefore not an argument against liberalism, as such, but a claiming that liberalism does not and truly cannot accomplish what it sets out to do—to divorce the political and the sacred. Liberal political theory, in and of itself, is unable to give a full account of the act of sacrifice that drives actual political communities. What can persuade a citizen to kill and die for the state? It is not the social contract. It cannot be individuals merely acting out of self-interest, because sacrifice, by its nature, operates against a strict understanding of self-interest. "No one sacrifices for a universal ideal, which has no locus in space and time."[42]

What compels an individual to offer sacrifice is the voice of the sovereign—that which compels beyond reason and beyond law, yet which is itself the foundation of law. The revolutionary moment that serves as the foundation of the modern state can only be properly understood as an act of a sovereign will and thus cannot be accounted for within the limits of liberal political theory.[43] Liberalism corresponds to atheism, but still conceptually relies on a notion of sovereignty that it borrows from another system, and thus falls into self-contradiction. So it is not that Schmitt is critiquing liberalism *because* it is "atheistic" but rather because it isn't atheistic, nor can it be.

A modern political theologian in the Schmittian tradition is therefore not necessarily one who argues for a particular understanding of God or for a particular political program, but instead one who recognizes the ongoing and inevitable relationship

between theology and politics. Put another way, the Schmittian political theologian is one who is attuned to the presence of the sacred within the political. Schmittian political theology is partly historical, we might say genealogical, but is first and foremost aware of how the sacred is configured in the modern political imaginary. Before moving on, let me offer an example of those who followed in Schmitt's footsteps and practiced a similar method of political theology.

The Frankfurt School

Such thinkers as Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Theodore Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and even Jürgen Habermas have been shown to be surprisingly reliant on the insights of Schmitt, even if his works were considered taboo for the German Left.[44] Benjamin's admiration for Schmitt's work was stated openly, while Adorno found this relationship of dependency too problematic and thus, for instance, edited out all references to Schmitt in one collection of Benjamin's works.[45]

However, I would argue that the conceptual similarity between Schmitt and some of the above thinkers extends even to their implied understanding of the relation between the theological and the political. What Schmitt does for the political, by exposing its inextricable ties to pre-modern theological concepts, Horkheimer and Adorno do for Enlightenment rationality as such. Just as liberalism is supposed to make way for a secular politics that is not tied to any particular theological framework, so also Enlightenment rationality was supposed to free us from metaphysics through an intellectual liberation and a disenchantment of the world.

What the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* shows us, however, is that modern thought,

even at its most anti-metaphysical, still operates within certain assumptions of the dominant metaphysics of the day. And is this not another way of stating Schmitt's thesis regarding the relation between political and theological concepts? Bourgeois society reduces everything to the quantifiable. But this cannot be taken all the way, because then human rationality itself becomes illusory.[46] As G.K. Chesterton quipped, "Why should *anything* go right; even observation and deduction? Why should not good logic be as misleading as bad logic? They are both movements in the brain of a bewildered ape?"[47]

Thus, at the heart of the Enlightenment quest for liberation is an implicit dualism between the comprehending mind and comprehendible matter. So long as we have the high ground of human rationality one may disavow any gods one likes, for mind itself has become interchangeable with God.[48] Enlightenment thinkers, at heart, want to be mystic-minimalists, reserving only the human mind to that privileged place of noumenal freedom. But for the sake of consistency Enlightenment rationality must sever its ties to the enchanted world, and like any branch cut off from the root, it withers up.[49] Whereas in the mystical world everything was alive, so in the positivist world everything is dead; or, where "Animism had endowed things with souls; industrialism makes souls into things."[50]

Horkheimer and Adorno, therefore, find Enlightenment rationality caught in the same sort of self-contradictory position as Schmitt finds political liberalism. And so, in order to understand our present, we must return to the past. Yet it is not for the sake of reviving the past. Horkheimer and Adorno are not pagans and Schmitt is not a theocrat. But we have an impoverished view of our own present state of affairs because we fail to adequately understand its relationship to our past. In the modern world's haste to "get

past" theology, the world has missed how deeply theological the modern world remains.

Alain Badiou

One might also include the works of philosopher Alain Badiou as an example of one who operates along the lines of the Schmittian political theological method. I see echoes of Schmitt's method in Badiou's political-theological treatment of his notion of "the Event." In his book, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, Badiou identifies the Apostle Paul's radical fidelity to the "Event" of the Resurrection of Jesus as paradigmatic of all revolutionary commitments. It is this radical fidelity to the event that cuts across all other competing lines of loyalty. Thus St. Paul is able to write that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. Paul becomes, as the title suggests, the foundation of universalism and the patron of the revolutionary cause that reconfigures the very identity of the subject.

According to Badiou, society is presently caught in an unending cycle, an oscillation between homogeny and difference. On the one hand, capital devours all difference, and, on the other hand, difference is constantly being reconstructed. This reconstructed identity under capitalism takes two forms: (1) as insignificant (identity is a meaningless masking of the Void), or (2) as over-significant (racial or religious identities are mythically reified). What is lost in the surging of identity politics under capitalism? Truth.[51] In *Logiques des mondes*, Badiou critiques what he calls "democratic materialism" for claiming that, "There is nothing but bodies and languages. . . ." but the alternative to democratic materialism, Badiou's "materialist dialectics," replies, "There is nothing but bodies and languages . . . *with the exception of truths*."[52] What we seek today,

therefore, is a break of this cycle and the intervention of Truth. And for this role of the militant figure who can bring us Truth, Badiou turns to the apostle Paul.

Paul's *apostolicity* breaks the dualism of prophet versus philosopher. The Jewish discourse seeks a sign, and is embodied in the figure of the prophet. "The discourse of the exception is Jewish. The sign, the miracle, election indicates transcendence beyond natural totality."[53] On the other hand, the Greek discourse, embodied in the figure of the philosopher, seeks wisdom. By binding "the *logos* with Being," the Greek discourse aims at "inclusion within totality as natural harmony."[54] The Jews are interested in the exception, the Greeks in totality: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom."[55] That is to say, Jewish discourse seeks *identity* (rooted in the exception, i.e. election), and Greek discourse seeks *homogeny* (the totalizing philosophical system). How is it overcome? Paul's claim that, "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek,"[56] is taken by Badiou to mean that, "[t]he two discourses are no longer distinguished by a real; the distinction is purely rhetorical."[57]

If the difference between Jewish and Greek discourse is rhetorical, then what is the *real* difference of the apostle? First, it is Paul's articulation that "truth is evental."[58] The truth-event, for Paul, is the Resurrection of Jesus, and its status as event is what exposes the Greek and Jewish discourses as illusory. The Resurrection is not a sign in the Jewish sense because, unlike the sign, the Resurrection cannot be separated from the subject who is announcing it. The sign is supposedly objective, there for all to see. The Resurrection, on the other hand, "does not in itself have power. The power comes from a subjective declaration, which will be called *pistis*, faith, or 'conviction.'"[59]

This is why salvation, for Paul, is not a matter of mere belief but of confession.

The belief, as internal conviction, is not efficacious. But it is here, precisely at the recognition of the Event's total subjectivity, that the Resurrection finds its full power. It is the totally subjective identity of *Christian,* which allows for the cutting across of the "normal" boundaries of identity: Jew/Greek, male/female, slave/free—there are *none of these in Christ*. Thus the Resurrection, as truth-event, appears neither as a sign nor as wisdom but as grace. It is accessible to all precisely because of its pure subjectivity. After all, why should the Pauline maxim, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female [only Christians and non-Christians]. . . ." ground universality? Because the identification of "Christian" cuts across the other markers: some slaves are Christian, some slaves are not Christian; some masters are Christian, some masters are not Christian. And while it is also the case that these other markers cut across Christianity (some Christians are Jews, some Christians are Greek; and so on) the reason why the Christian identity grounds the universal project is precisely because of its subjective or "performative" element.[60]

Badiou therefore argues, in a Schmittian way, that the negation of the supposedly objective identity markers (race, nation, sex, etc.) in favor of a more subjective and therefore universal identity is indebted to St. Paul's notion of fidelity to the Resurrection. Many more such examples could be provided, but let this suffice to show that Schmitt's method is far from dead and still has many practitioners to this day.

Schmittian Political Theology on the Doctrine of the Trinity

In the remainder of this chapter I will seek to show that Giorgio Agamben's work *The Kingdom and the Glory* is an example of a Schmittian engagement with the doctrine

of the Trinity. Agamben addresses the question: how is modern political power construed in specifically trinitarian terms, or, how is the trinitarian understanding of God reflected in the modern political imaginary? The bulk of this section will be dedicated to Giorgio Agamben's answer, but first, acknowledgment must be made of the short account of a trinitarian political theology that Schmitt himself offered.

Carl Schmitt on the Trinity

Turning his attention to the doctrine of the Trinity, Schmitt finds justification for his understanding of the friend-enemy distinction, which he had described in *The Concept of the Political*. For Schmitt, "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy."[61] Politics, which is a constitutively human endeavor, hinges on this conflict. "A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics."[62] And it seems, by implication, that Schmitt would rather us live in a world without peace than in a world without politics. For without politics, without the genuine threat of war and violence, we would lose an essential component of our existential humanity. Without it, "there would not be a meaningful antithesis whereby men could be required to sacrifice life, authorized to shed blood, and kill other human beings."[63] The friend-enemy distinction, therefore, rouses us in some unique way to our own humanity. For we are able to truly find ourselves only in contrast to what we are not. And so for us to find our common identity, we must confront that adversary who aims to unsettle our very "way of life" and "therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of

existence."[64]

In *Political Theology II* Schmitt takes up this antithesis, explaining that in any situation in which there is need for change or reform then there is necessarily some opposition between the party in favor of stasis and the party in favor of change. "Friendship is almost impossible between the lord of a world in need of change … and the liberator."[65] This opposition was once expressed in theological terms by the Gnostic opposition between the creator-god and the redeemer-god. Schmitt indicates that the Creator and Redeemer must always be in conflict; they are "by definition enemies."[66] After all, how could a perfect, all-powerful, and all-knowing God create a world that needs saving? Augustine, in his development of the orthodox Christian response to this Gnostic challenge, located the problem in human freedom: God creates the world as good and it is due to human freedom that we find evil all around us.

Christology confronts both of these dualisms. For Christ, in his own person, is the reconciliation of God and man. He is the embodiment of the dialectic of divine will and human freedom. And, as the Second Person of the Trinity, we also see the attempt at unity of Creator (Father) and Redeemer (Son). The doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, reinstates the friend-enemy distinction by inscribing this opposition into God's own nature. He cites Goethe's Latin motto approvingly: *Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse*. [There can be nothing against God, except God himself.] And who is this *God against God* but Christ himself? "Save, save me my Jesus . . . Save, save me from my father and his love, his tyranny."[67]

Schmitt is only beginning to point toward the potential meaning of a Trinitarian theology. But the answer to which he gestures is surely no answer at all. The analogy is

strained beyond recognition. For how is it that the relation of Father and Son can be the theological antecedent or parallel to the political distinction between friend and enemy. Given the *unity* of the Father and the Son, what does this say about the nature of the friend and the enemy who must be totally alien to one another? That, of course, is to say nothing of the problem of conceiving of the Father-Son relationship as primarily antagonistic.

Agamben: A Schmittian?

For a more thorough treatment of trinitarian political theology, therefore, I turn to the work of Giorgio Agamben who follows Schmitt's program in *The Kingdom and The Glory*. Against Schmitt, Agamben identifies *oikonomia* (taken from the early trinitarian theologians) rather than sovereignty as the central theological concept to be secularized in the modern theory of the state, because what we find in the modern liberal state is a managerial bureaucracy that is "economic," concerning itself with the *nomos* of the *oikos.*

What follows is a detailed summary and review of Giorgio Agamben's *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*. In this section I hope to accomplish two tasks. First is to show that methodologically, Agamben's project falls within the ambit of what I am designating a Schmittian political theology. Agamben's work is, I would argue, the best Schmittian answer to the question of the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. Secondly, however, I hope to show in my critique of Agamben's work that even this fails to adequately represent Trinitarian theology.

To identify Agamben's work as "Schmittian" is made difficult by some of Agamben's own claims in the opening chapter of *The Kingdom and the Glory*. Here Agamben suggests that his program takes more after the work of Erik Peterson than Carl Schmitt. For now, it is enough to recognize that both Agamben and Peterson are in some way criticizing Schmitt's program of political theology, thus Agamben portrays Peterson as an ally. However, I would strongly protest against Agamben's claim that his work is more aligned with Peterson than Schmitt. Peterson's strongest critique against Schmitt is that he is insufficiently theological and not attuned to the reality of Christian revelation. Agamben's postmodern theology-without-God finds no friend in Peterson's radically Catholic writings. Thus I would insist that Agamben's program remains firmly within the domain of Schmitt's political theology.

Schmittian political theology is summarized by the thesis: "All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts." Agamben's rebuttal is that this thesis must be extended beyond the bounds of the "political" even to the "economic." *Political* theology, according to Agamben, refers to the founding of "the transcendence of sovereign power on the single God," whereas so-called *economic* theology, "replaces this transcendence with the idea of an *oikonomia*, conceived as immanent ordering."[68] In other words, Schmitt's program of political theology, with its narrow focus on the correlation between political power and divine sovereignty misses the ways in which more "economic" (bureaucratic, administrative) forms of power are also grounded in theological concepts. The political and the economic differ as the *polis* differs from the *oikos*.[69] In the *oikos*, power is "administrative," and

"not bound to a system of rules."[70] This subtle terminological shift not withstanding, Agamben maintains the basic structure of Schmitt's thought.

Agamben favors his own *economic* theology over Schmitt's *political* theology because he believes that "theology is itself 'economic' and did not simply become so at a later time through secularization."[71] Theological concepts, on the other hand, *become* political through the process of secularization, as Schmitt's thesis states. Agamben's contention is that the theological concepts employed by the early church were already, in themselves, economic in nature and thus do not need to be secularized in order to find their import in the broader culture. "Christian theology is, from its beginning, economic-managerial, and not politico-statal."[72]

The New Testament is replete with such economic terms as δοῦλος, διάκονος, οικονόμος, etc. Even such essential Christian terms such as κύριος and ἐκκλησία refer to the household economy.[73] Agamben insists that the early messianic community understood itself as an *oikonomia* and not a polity.[74] However, is not the New Testament equally, if not more so, filled with properly political language: βασιλεὺς, βασιλείας, κρίσις, and even δικαιοσύνη [king, kingdom, judgment, justice]?[75] One could make the case, as many already have, that Christian theology does not require secularization in order to become political, but that it is political in and of itself. And so it seems that the distinction between economic theology and political theology is not enough to truly distinguish the nature of Agamben and Schmitt's projects. Agamben has directed our attention beyond Schmitt's notion of sovereignty, and for that we can be grateful, but he is still repeating Schmitt's program of analyzing conceptions of power according to their theological antecedents. And if Agamben sees secularization as having a distorting affect

on the meaning of theology, then his own project should be critiqued in the same way. His 'economic theology' is a distortion of dogmatic theology just as much as Schmitt's political theology.

Peterson counters Schmitt's approach to political theology with an appeal to the Trinity. For Peterson, in short, the Trinity shatters the Schmittian program precisely because there is no Trinitarian *analogy* in modern politics. Yet Agamben takes this appeal to the Trinity and runs with it in the opposite direction. If anything, Agamben takes up where Carl Schmitt has left off, precisely by taking the doctrine of the Trinity and incorporating it into this political theological paradigm. Agamben is somewhat contra-Schmitt in his conclusion, namely that the power that is founded on Christian theology is *economic* rather than *political*. And appeal to the doctrine of the Trinity will serve this end. But he remains thoroughly Schmittian in his methodology.

The Trinity and Economic Theology

One instance of an early Christian usage of *oikonomia*, on which Agamben focuses serious attention, is the Pauline expression: "economy of the mystery." Ephesians 3:8-9 states: "Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery [ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου] hidden for ages in God who created all things." Thus according to Agamben the use of the term *oikonomia*, which refers to administrative power, includes not just God's providential ordering of the world but extends even to the salvific act of God in reconciling the world to himself, i.e. the *mystery*.[76]

As this expression, the economy of the mystery, moves into the Patristic era the meaning shifts as is evidenced by the syntactic reversal. The Church Fathers refer not to an economy of the mystery, but to the mystery of the economy. For Paul, the economy of the mystery referred to the task that God has assigned to him to declare the mystery of God's self-revelatory and salvific act in Jesus Christ. The inversion of this Pauline formula into the mystery of the economy suggests that the very content of what is revealed is itself an economy. Here we see the beginnings of the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The term *oikonomia* in theology comes to have a dual meaning: First, God governs the world via an administrative power, as one orders an *oikos*. And even the act of God's salvation is an extension of this administrative power. This is the traditional Pauline usage of *oikonomia*. Secondly, however, we might also say that not only does God govern the world with economic power, but that God himself *is an economy*. These two different uses of *oikonomia*, while they appear to refer to quite distinct economies—"the articulation of a single divine substance into three persons," and, "the historical dispensation of salvation"[77]—are actually an attempt to reconcile the riddle of the nature of God's involvement in the world.

What one confronts by these two uses of "economy" is what will come to be known as the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity, the difference between God's being and God's act. There is an intra-divine economy, the relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and there is an extra-divine economy, the relation of God to the world. And the *mystery of the economy* is that God is drawing the world into himself, to participate in his own life. The believer is invited to call God "Father" and to live as an adopted child of God, only because God already exists in eternity as Father and Son.

What interests Agamben in this Trinitarian description of divine life and divine power is that it opens a special window into governmentality, because it represents divine monarchy in an "economic" mode.

The distinction between God's external ordering of the world and God's internal ordering of his own life is what Agamben takes to be the most important aspect of the doctrine of the Trinity. The notion that God has an *oikonomia* that is in any way separable from his *ousia*, is a radical departure from Aristotelian theology in which the unmoved mover orders the cosmos according to "fate." It is also foreign to the Neo-Platonists who understood the world as coming into existence by an involuntary motion of God's nature: like a flower that is fragrant, or the sun that shines. Creation proceeds from God without any act of the will. "The doctrine of the *oikonomia* radically revokes this unity. The economy through which God governs the world is, as a matter of fact, entirely different from his being, and cannot be inferred from it."[78]

Here Agamben departs tremendously from the classical conceptualization of the meaning of trinitarian theology. One of the essential hallmarks of classical theism is the identity of God's being (*ousia*) with any of the divine attributes. The idea that the doctrine of the Trinity or the economic ordering of divine life in anyway "revokes this unity" would be a total scandal to the great theologians of the classical tradition. Yet Agamben does not cede this ground, but continues to present his understanding of the Trinity as if it were shared by the mainstream orthodox position of the Church. For instance, he even cites Thomas Aquinas in *Summa contra gentiles* 2.23.1, that in creating, God acts not *per necessitatem naturae* [according to the necessity of nature] but *per arbitrium voluntatis* [according to the decision of the will].[79] "When Thomas Aquinas

identifies in God essence and will he is actually only radicalizing this primacy of the will. Given that what God's will wants is his very essence, this implies that God's will always wants itself; it is always will to will."[80]

Yet this reading of Aquinas disregards the most basic elements of his philosophy, one of them being that "will follows upon intellect."[81] Of course, in light of the doctrine of divine simplicity, the intellect and will of God are not said to be really distinct. However, let us take, for example, another essential Thomist dictum, that grace does not destroy nature, grace perfects nature. What is at stake in this distinction is that the will of God for the creature, the grace contingently conferred, must act in harmony with the intelligible nature that the creature already possesses. Similarly, the moral demands placed upon a creature, for Aquinas, are not arbitrarily determined by God but are in logical relation to the nature of the creature. Thus, for Agamben to interpret Thomas as prioritizing the will over the intellect could not be more wrong. Much less would Aquinas, or any of the classical theologians, ever think of asserting a radical distinction between God's will and God's being.

Agamben even goes so far as to reread the entire Arian controversy as a debate about whether or not being and act are separate or distinct in God. And it is Arius, he claims, who was the champion of *unity*. Agamben insists that the debate over whether or not the Son has an *arche* cannot be read as matter of temporal succession. After all, Arius acknowledges that the Son was generated *achronos*. Nor, Agamben claims, is it merely a question of equality between the Father and Son in a hierarchical sense. Rather, the question is, whether the *Logos* "the word and praxis of God" is derived from the Father or is, like the Father, *anarchos*—without beginning, that is to say, without foundation.

According to Nicea, the Son reigns *anarchos kai ateleutetos* (without beginning and without end), or as Agamben translates it: anarchically and infinitely.[82] Because the Son is understood as the *Logos* of God, Agamben concludes that: "The fact that Christ is 'anarchic' means that, in the last instance, language and praxis do not have a foundation in being."[83] Thus it is Athanasius who wanted to insist that being and act are separate in God, while the Arian position wants to maintain a unity of God's eternal essence and God's Word, by which he orders the whole cosmos. To say, as Arius did, that the Son is not *anarche* is to say that the Word is derived from God and does not subsist independently. The orthodox position, on the other hand, by insisting that the Word, like the Father, is *anarche* means that there is a non-identity of being and act in God—both subsist without origin. "The function of the Trinitarian economy is to hypostasize, to give real existence to the *logos* and to the praxis of God."[84]

The victory of the orthodox trinitarian position was crucial for the advancement of Christian theology, as well as for its function as "laboratory" of conceptualizations of power. According to Agamben's reading, through the articulation of trinitarian theology the Christians are able to conceptualize the nature of God's administration of the world according to the freedom of his own will. Through the doctrine of the Trinity the Church escaped the realm of sheer "fate" and arrived at a notion of "providence" through which God can freely and voluntarily order the cosmos, independently of acting by the necessity of his nature, as in the case of Aristotle's unmoved mover.

But Agamben treats the Trinity with too great an abstraction, as if the Son were merely the "praxis" of the Father. In commenting on the psychological analogy of the Trinity, Augustine notes that within a human person we can speak of memory, and

understanding, and love, etc. But all of these are functions of a subject, *I*. *I* am the one who remembers, who understands, who loves etc. Not so with God, who is not "one person *having* those three things; on the contrary, it *is* three persons."[85] Agamben's analogy has strained trinitarian theology past its breaking point.

Furthermore, if the Trinity teaches us that in God being and praxis are radically distinct, then taking up the psychological analogy, would one not say that in God intellect and will are radically distinct? Yet this application yields nonsense rather than insight, as the intellect and will, while conceptually distinct, are in the end never truly separable. And this is very much the point of such analogies, to show how God may be three and yet one. Agamben's treatment of this doctrine fails to ever account for God's unity. It is as if Agamben understands the Trinity to merely be introducing distinctions into God, rather than also showing us something profound about God's unity.

Agamben believes that by establishing God the Father and his Word as separate in person, Christian theology distinguishes between *Macht* and *Gewalt*, between *arche* and *dynamis*, between what he will refer to as "Kingdom" and "Government." In essence, it is a distinction between divine transcendence and immanence. While Father and Son may be distinct as divine Persons, they remain one in essence, which is the Christian attempt to hold together a balance between transcendence and immanence such that one can avoid falling into the extreme positions of Gnosticism on one hand and pantheism on the other.[86] God is at once altogether separate from the world, reigning above it, yet he is also at work in the world, governing over it, and in a sense *through* it.

Agamben builds on the classical tradition's claim that the very existence of creatures is dependent upon the ceaseless activity of God. It is not as if God creates the

world and it perdures without further intervention. On the contrary, as Agamben quotes Augustine, "[I]f he withdraws this work from things, we will neither live nor move nor be. It is clear therefore that not for one single day did God cease from the work of government [*ad opera regendi*]."[87]

This principle is articulated in the actual political sphere in Adolphe Thiers' expression: "*Le roi règne, mais il ne gouverne pas,* [the king reigns, but does not govern,]" which was his description of an ideal constitutional monarchy. The king possesses *Macht*/*arche* but not *Gewalt*/*dynamis*. Agamben suggests we might also see this distinction of powers operative in the medieval notion of the "two swords."[88]

> And if due consideration be given to the words of the Gospel, the way in which the Church possesses both swords is perfectly illustrated by the two swords. For, as Bede says, one of those swords was drawn and the other remained in its sheath. And so, although there were two swords, we read that only one sword was drawn, with which Peter struck the servant of the High Priest and cut off his ear. What, therefore, does this mean—that while there were two swords, the one was drawn and the other remained in its sheath—if not that the Church possesses two swords: the spiritual as user, which is represented by the drawn sword, and the material, not as user, but as commander.[89]

According to this, one must always distinguish between regnant and governmental power, between a power that is transcendent, perhaps even symbolic in nature, and a power that is executive in nature. In God, according to the trinitarian understanding, God possesses both as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son and Spirit are the active principles intimately present and active within the created order; the Father is the subject of the divine activity, yet his activity is always and only by means of the Son and Spirit. The Son and Spirit are said to be the "two hands" of the Father.[90]

The economic ordering within the divine life, that is the distinction within God between being and praxis, is what allows God to operate administratively within the world without being reducible to the world. "Providence is the name of the '*oikonomia*' insofar as the latter presents itself as the government of the world."[91] God's providential ordering of the world, as Agamben demonstrates well, is very often articulated along the lines of a political analogy. The hierarchy of primary and secondary causality, by which God orders the entire cosmos, finds a clear parallel in the king who exercises his sovereignty by means of administrators who carry out his will. Here again we see a distinction between Kingdom and Government.

By analogy, what the Trinity articulates by the unity of the Father and the Son is the ultimate inseparability of the Kingdom and the Government. "If the Kingdom and the Government are separated in God by a clear opposition, then no government of the world is actually possible: we would have, on the one hand, an impotent sovereignty and on the other, the infinite and chaotic series of particular (and violent) acts of providence."[92] Without the unity of Kingdom and Government the work of providence is violent because it is arbitrary. However, what constitutes providential government as divine (and non-violent) is "the fact that it fully coincides with the very nature of the things that it directs."[93]

As Aquinas puts it, "What creatures receive from God constitutes their nature; what a man imposes artificially on beings of nature is a coercion. The comparison then is this: a necessity of propulsion in the arrow's flight is a sign of the archer's aiming it; a necessity of nature in creatures is a sign of the provident God's governing them."[94] For Thomas, this is in sharp contrast to an Islamic representation of the created order,

according to which, every action in the world is a consequence of an immediate action on God's part.[95] For example, that the fire gives off heat is a consequence of the direct and immediate intention of God in each and every case of fire giving off heat, not merely to the intrinsic nature of fire. The Thomistic conception of divine power wants, instead, to show a coincidence between God's willing and the effective and, in a sense, independent power of secondary causes. Here the secondary causes of the created world (like fire being the actual *cause* of heat) are analogically related to those magistrates who genuinely exercise political power, but do so on behalf of and in the name of a higher sovereign.

Agamben will claim, "The god that reigns, yet does not govern, thus makes possible the government. In other words, the government is the epiphenomenon of providence (or of the kingdom)."[96] The distinction between Kingdom and Government appears in theology before it does so in political theory.[97] And herein lies Agamben's central claim vis-à-vis the political (or in this case, shall we say economic) significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. "[T]he intra-Trinitarian relation between the Father and the Son can be considered to be the theological paradigm of every *potestas vicaria* [vicarious power]…."[98] The political distinction of Kingdom and Government finds its Schmittian, theological antecedent in the doctrine of the Trinity. In the modern world, this enduring legacy is expressed in our bureaucratic exercise of power in which there is "no substance of power, but only an 'economy,' only a 'government.'"[99] Because, like in the intra-Trinitarian life of God, there is ultimately no *arche*, no actual source or origin of power, but a government that is vicarious of nothing. It is Government with no Kingdom.[100] Not unlike the Lacanian notion of a Master-Signifier, "an empty signifier without a signified.

… the Master-Signifier which guarantees the community's consistency is a signifier whose signified is an enigma for the members themselves—nobody really knows what it means, but each of them somehow presupposes that others know."[101]

From here, Agamben intends to draw our attention to "the obsessive repetition of a triadic schema that descends from the Trinity, via the angelic triarchies, to the earthly hierarchy."[102] This triadic structure of power is taken as an indication of the Trinity as the source of all power and that subsequent administration of the world will echo this trinitarian structure. We may note, for instance, that even the ecclesial hierarchy exists as a triad: bishops, presbyters, and deacons. "Hierarchy is essentially the activity of government. … And its origin and its archetype is the Trinitarian economy. … For this reason—that is, insofar as it is a 'Divine imitation' and a 'likeness of God', the hierarchy (whether it be earthly or celestial) is essentially triadic."[103]

According to Agamben, classical Christian angelology gives a key insight into this "divine economy." There are two basic functions that an angel can perform.[104] Commenting on the vision of the prophet Daniel, Pope Gregory the Great distinguishes between those who serve [*ministare*] and those who attend [*assistere*]. Throughout medieval theology, this distinction continued to define the dual function of angelic beings: to participate in the providential government of the world (to minister), and to live in perpetual glorification of God (to assist). Here again we see a distinction between "government" and "kingdom."

Aquinas, following Pseudo-Dionysius, divides the angelic multitudes into nine ranks, each existing in a set of three. At the top of the hierarchy, are those angels that dwell perpetually in the presence of God and live in ceaseless praise: Cherubim,

Seraphim, and Thrones. The second tier consists of Dominions, Powers, and Virtues. These three exist to oversee the ordering of the cosmos. The final three, the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels, exist for the more localized function of the protection and government of nations, cities, and individuals.

What insight do the angelic hierarchies bring to Agamben's question of the Government and the Kingdom? The significance is found in this: the Cherubs, Seraphs, and Thrones, who live for the sole purpose of glorifying God, have a ministry that is eternal, whereas the other angels, whose function is more governmental, can do so only temporarily. "The purpose of the angelic offices [that is, the lower orders] is to lead men to salvation. Accordingly the angelic offices and so their orders will not go on after judgment day."[105] These angels certainly continue to exist, and even their hierarchical ordering remains, even if the execution of their distinct ministries ceases. As Agamben puts it, "The hierarchy, which appeared to be tightly linked to the exercise of an office or ministry, gloriously outlives it."[106]

So while all Government will eventually come to an end, what will remain is Glory. This, Agamben thinks, is why Peterson identifies *worship* as so politically relevant. It is worship that predates governmentality and worship that will outlast it. "[T]he Government is nothing but the brief interval running between the two eternal and glorious figures of the Kingdom."[107] Praise and worship, therefore, remind us of the finality of all political operation and relativizes governmentality. In fact, the one example, in Christian theology, of an endless Government is Hell wherein the demons will continue forever in their ordered function as the executors of divine punishment.[108]

Thus we are reminded, "the ultimate and glorious telos of … the profane powers is to be deactivated and made inoperative."[109]

The angelic and ecclesial hierarchies maintain this triadic structure because they are echoes of their true origin in the triune God. The relations of Kingdom and Glory exist in the created world because they pre-exist in God, and the created world merely participates in the ceaseless trinitarian life of Glory.

Glory becomes a dominant theme in Agamben's work and it's with his commentary on the following passage from John's Gospel that his argument comes to full completion.

> Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. … I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.[110]

Here, in this eternal exchange of glory between the Father and the Son, we see the return of Agamben's theme of *vicariousness*. The Father exists to glorify the Son, and the Son to glorify the Father. The divine power is *anarchic*. "There is no substance of power, but only an 'economy.'"[111] And this economy of glory descends and reaches even into the created world, as Jesus continues: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them."[112] Thus the created world is caught up into this divine life—*eternal life*—to live, with the angels, in ceaseless praise.

Agamben's focus on the concept of glory preserves the viability of Schmitt's political theology in the modern world. Talk of "sovereignty" and "acclamation," in an era dominated by liberal democracy, may seem anachronistic. But perhaps even now we are seeing the return of a fascistic style of acclamation associated with personality-driven

politics. In either case, the notion of glory remains undeniably central to the political machine, even in the liberal democratic state.

Because of Schmitt's focus on the concept of *sovereignty*, and because of his own historical situatedness, Schmitt saw the political meaning of *latria* as expressed in the popular acclamation of the sovereign. *Heil Hitler*, is, for Schmitt, a political theological expression of acclamation. Agamben, on the other hand, because of his analysis of the vicarious nature of power expressed in trinitarian theology and the economy of glory, recognizes that even in a non-sovereign political situation, the power of acclamation endures. In a democratic society such as our own, and in our capitalistic society of the spectacle, "glory" circulates endlessly via the media's creation of politics-as-entertainment and entertainment-as-politics.[113]

Conclusion

Through this summary, I hope to have shown at least two things: (1) that Agamben's work falls, methodologically, into the same paradigm as the work of Carl Schmitt; (2) that Agamben, while articulating a Schmittian understanding of the Trinity, fails to do it justice. His account of the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be accepted, because his representation of the doctrine fails at understanding its historical and dogmatic significance.

As to the first task, to identify Agamben as methodologically Schmittian, this seems rather evident. While other modern political theologians will engage with Schmitt by uncovering where "sovereignty" continues to exist in liberal democratic society, Agamben shifts our attention away from sovereignty altogether, but shows how "glory"

is perhaps a more fundamental category than sovereignty as it accounts for the monarchies of old as well as today's democracies. In shifting our attention from "political theology" in a strict sense, toward "economic theology," Agamben is actually preserving the relevance of the Schmittian paradigm.

What *The Kingdom and the Glory* represents is an even more detailed analogical/genealogical reading of political and theological concepts than Schmitt ever attempted. Agamben offers a critical revision of Schmitt that preserves Schmitt's own method and basic outlook. Many contemporary revivals of Schmitt, as we will see in the next chapter, often grossly misrepresent Schmitt's project. Many engage with his work as with a specter of looming totalitarian politics. This became especially noticeable in the wake of the George W. Bush presidency, post-9/11, which saw an expansion of executive power in the United States government.[114] Some foresaw a return to authoritarian politics, and used Schmitt's work as an example of how and why such politics may re-emerge. But Agamben takes Schmitt in a new an interesting direction, by borrowing his same basic framework of political-theological analogy and genealogy, instead showing that it is not just the dictator, but the modern liberal bureaucratic state, that in someway is imaging God. In this state of affairs, Agamben sees a reflection of the triune God who is himself a relation of persons, always ever deferring to the other, without foundation.

The final question that remains, therefore, is whether or not Agamben's approach adequately resolves the question of the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity. How can Agamben's treatment of the enduring legacy of trinitarian theology be considered credible, when he so significantly misinterprets the crucial debates regarding Christology, voluntarism, etc.? In the end, what Agamben's valiant attempt at a trinitarian

political theology highlights is what Erik Peterson declared long ago, which is that trinitarian dogma cannot be secularized. The Trinity, specifically, marks the breaking point of political theology, because all human institutions fail utterly to model it. To secularize the doctrine of the Trinity, which Schmittian political theology must do, can only produce a fatal distortion of the doctrine. *Inter creatorem et creaturam non potest similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo* [Between creator and creature one cannot express a similitude without implying a greater dissimilitude between them]. And so, in an effort to construct a genealogy of modern governmentality, Agamben shows himself totally inadequate at interpreting the theology of the classical tradition from Athanasius to Aquinas.

Agamben's most glaring and fatal flaw is his failure to recognize that the Trinity does not introduce a "fracture between being and praxis in the deity."[115] On the contrary, it is an articulation of the divine unity. As Agamben has construed it, Arius understood Christ as being more closely united to the Father than did Athanasius. But what the Fathers meant by Christ being *anarche* is not that he is without foundation or origin. The Son is generated, yet this sharing of the Father's nature with the Son is *so thorough* and their identity so complete and perfect, such that the Son "shares" even in the Father's *anarchy*.[116]

Also, conspicuously absent in Agamben's treatment is any significant mention of the Holy Spirit. Agamben's approach is essentially binitarian, or rather, would not be in anyway altered if he were merely a binitarian. He writes that "twofold (or threefold) structure of the governmental machine" exposes power as essentially vicarious.[117] The mere fact that Agamben's thesis holds true whether we are dealing with a division of

power into two parts or three, and presumably would hold true in any number of configurations, shows that it has ceased to be actually trinitarian in any meaningful sense.

For example, Agamben writes that: "power has the structure of a *gerere vices*, it is in its very essence *vices*, vicariousness. That is, the term *vices* names the original vicariousness of sovereign power, or, if you like it, its absolutely insubstantial and 'economical' character. The twofold (or threefold) structure of the governmental machine … acquires in this perspective its proper sense."[118] Here the possible "threefold" structure of the governmental machine is an unelaborated afterthought. And, in fact, as he goes on to describe this manifold structure, it is *always* in terms of pairs, and never a triad: the Kingdom and Government, *auctoritas* and *potestas*, *ordinatio* and *executio*. He also references "the distinction of powers in modern democracies." But surely his argument cannot be that, for instance, the division of power into executive, legislative, and judicial branches in the United States' government is in any reliant on the doctrine of the Trinity, or even the notion of vicarious power. These divisions of power do not even map onto the distinction between Kingdom and Government, a distinction to which Agamben's whole thesis is dedicated.[119]

Agamben's theological shortcomings notwithstanding, to close this chapter I will make a more sweeping claim, namely that the Schmittian method of political theology, in and of itself, necessarily distorts theology.[120] That is not to say that Schmitt's work is without value or insight. It is, indeed, a profoundly insightful method and tool for investigation. However, in understanding how modern political concepts are secularized permutations of older theological concepts, we shed light on *modern political concepts*, and thus it is a useful tool for the study of that subject, but as a tool for studying the

antecedent theological concepts, it is wholly inadequate.

The secularization of a doctrine is, almost by definition, a distortion of a doctrine. As was said at the outset, Schmittian secularization is not the same as a "disenchantment" of the world. And Agamben, for his part, seems to be sensitive to the relative autonomy of the theology with which he engages. He writes, for instance:

> Theology can resolve itself into atheism, and providentialism into democracy, because *God has made the world just as if it were without God and governs it as though it governed itself*. … Modernity, removing God from the world, has not only failed to leave theology behind, but in some ways has done nothing other than to lead the project of the providential *oikonomia* to completion.[121]

In other words, there is a concern to preserve the integrity of the meaning of theological concepts, even as we deal with them in their secularized form. But it nevertheless remains the case that the secularized notion of the Trinity (however one may interpret that) is *not* the doctrine of the Trinity, per se. And in this relocation and re-appropriation of the theological concept, there is a fundamental distortion that occurs. Badiou's "Event" is not the Resurrection of Jesus. Schmitt's sovereign is not God.[122] And Agamben's economy of acclamation is not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So asking about the political significance of a certain theological concept cannot be fully satisfied by merely appealing to its secularized form.

Secondly, a doctrine that is part of the cultural zeitgeist and the metaphysical epoch will be, at best, the 'popularized' form of that doctrine and necessarily will lack any of the subtlety or nuance that the doctrine might necessarily require. For instance, we might say with some confidence that there is a "Schmittian" correspondence between the classical doctrine of divine omnipotence and the modern state which accrues power to

itself. Yet if such a relationship does exist, what does it illuminate, other than the self-divinization of the modern state? Can someone, by analyzing the inner-workings of, say, the military-industrial complex, come to discover or say anything of insight with respect to divine omnipotence? Of course not. Reading theology in this way, through the light of these political analogies, will fall into all of the same problems.

In short, we may say that the Schmittian political theological method, while adequate to its very specific task, is ultimately insufficient in answering the question of a theological doctrine's political significance because it cannot address the theological in and of itself. With its own tools the Schmittian method can address theological doctrines only in their secularized form. What is immediately foreclosed by this method is the possibility that a theological concept can have any immediate or intrinsic political significance. We turn, then, in the next chapter to examine the post-Schmittian theological method to determine its strength and weaknesses and its potential adequacy for answering the question as to the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TRINITY AS POLITICAL PROGRAM

Introduction

Chapter two follows the same structure of the previous chapter. First I will examine a particular approach to political theology, and second I will consider how this approach has treated the question of the doctrine of the Trinity. In the first chapter I dealt with the political theology of Carl Schmitt. In this chapter, I present the "new political theology" that began with Johann Baptist Metz.[123] The key difference of this post-Schmittian approach to political theology is that it is more deliberately oriented toward political engagement. In a sort of Marxian twist, we could say that the old political theology interpreted the world, the new political theology aims to change it. And the so-called "social doctrine of the Trinity," most notably developed by Jürgen Moltmann, is the clearest example of the application of the new political theology to the question of the Trinity.

Through the course of this chapter I will survey recent examples of the new political theology at work, notably in progressive attempts to revive the work of the conservative theorist Carl Schmitt. Examples include Bonnie Honig, Regina Schwartz, and Clayton Crockett. This post-Schmittian mode of political theology follows Schmitt in identifying the relationship between absolute divine sovereignty and absolute political sovereignty. But, unlike Schmitt, these progressive thinkers often aim to undermine rather than legitimize political sovereigns. To accomplish this task they will deliberately break with the classical or orthodox religious traditions in order to produce a theology that is more amenable to their political aims. Whereas Schmitt's task was ultimately

descriptive, these progressives believe that their theological constructions can function *prescriptively* to undermine the consolidation of power in the modern state. However, as was pointed out in the previous chapter, this represents a fundamental misunderstanding of Schmitt, insofar as they mistake Schmitt's analysis of a systematic analogy between political and theological concepts, for some kind of causal relation.

As in chapter one, the secondary task of this chapter is to consider examples of how this mode of political theology has been applied to the doctrine of the Trinity. Such thinkers included in this section are Slavoj Žižek, Jürgen Moltmann, Leonardo Boff, and Miroslav Volf, all of who have identified the doctrine of the Trinity as an element within theology that has crucial political implications. The most common of these approaches is what has come be known as social trinitarianism, popularized by Moltmann.

In short, social trinitarianism prioritizes the distinction of Persons in the Trinity such that it is comparable to the social relations that exist between human persons. According to these "social trinitarians," the doctrine undermines any attempt to consolidate power because the triune God exercises sovereignty as three co-equal Persons. The perichoretic love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit becomes a model for socio-political communities to imitate.

I intend to show that what is lacking in the post-Schmittian, social trinitarian approach is two-fold. In the terminology of liberation theologian Clodovis Boff, this post-Schmittian approach to political theology lacks the necessary hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations.[124] Theologically, the doctrine of the Trinity is developed in such a way as to incline it toward having political relevance. This is a failure of "hermeneutic mediation," insofar as the theological content of the doctrine of the Trinity has not been

fairly or adequately handled. In the end, "social" themes are over-emphasized, distorting the historical and systematic role of the doctrine. Social trinitarianism is especially problematic in its departure from traditional and orthodox articulation of the doctrine because it tends to deny major tenets of classical theism such as divine simplicity or impassibility. The greatest theological failure of social trinitarianism is that it reduces God to "a being."[125]

Second, sociologically, the social trinitarians are left without valuable or unique political insights, and what is offered is not in anyway dependent upon faith or participation in the triune God. In an entirely circular fashion, they infuse trinitarian theology with communitarian values, and then extract those values from the doctrine, as if something new were being discovered. Such political theologies tell us more about the political proclivities of the theologians than the theological topic under consideration.

To say that the doctrine of the Trinity, in itself, commands or even suggests social egalitarianism or democracy is simply ahistorical. It is quite clear that it is only *after* the liberalization of Christianity that, in retrospect, certain trinitarian terminology is used to buttress liberal democratic values. It is not enough to simply advocate for communities of self-giving love, and the like, without grounding one's perspective in the specific needs of the time, and in realistic political possibilities of that specific context.

This new political theology brings us one step closer to satisfying the question with which we began, to consider the doctrine of the Trinity with a mode of Christian theology intending Christian political praxis. However, the methods employed by this political theology are insufficient to the task. Thus, in the following chapter, I will

undertake to articulate more thoroughly a method that will address Christian political praxis without sacrificing the integrity of dogmatic theology or of social analysis.

The "New" Political Theology

Metz and the New Political Theology

Johann Baptist Metz originated what he termed a "new" political theology. Schmitt himself dedicates much of *Political Theology II* to responding to this new challenge. Metz suggests that the Holocaust must be a turning point for theology. No real theology can be done with one's back toward Auschwitz. And thus Metz's new political theology is—unlike Schmitt's—explicitly oriented toward practical ends. And this is what I identify as the central methodological difference. Schmitt analyzes political concepts in order to uncover underlying theological antecedents. Metz, on the other hand, interrogates theological concepts in order to reveal grounds for social-political engagement. The theological content in these two bodies of work are performing very different functions. What is for Schmitt a purely conceptual analysis becomes for Metz a practical engagement. One might say, as an oversimplification, that where Schmitt is offering a descriptive political theology, Metz offers a prescriptive one.[126] To put it another way, Schmitt's political theology can be fittingly called a political philosophy (with practical implications, no doubt), but Metz's political theology is more akin to a political program, with a more immediate eye toward political engagement.

Related to this prescriptive/descriptive comparison, one might also say that the new political theology has a tendency to be progressive or revolutionary in its orientation. Though, this, I think, tends to be a coincidence rather than due to anything intrinsic in the

method. One may just as well employ theological concepts for conservative political ends. It just so happens, it seems, that many turn to the new political theology precisely as an attempt to undermine or overthrow the dominant theological paradigm which Schmitt's political theology represents. Because Schmitt's method focuses our attention on the political system and metaphysical paradigm that holds power in a given society, it makes sense that his work does not draw our energy towards revolution.[127] Post-Schmittian political theologians tend to acknowledge along with Schmitt that there is a correspondence between absolute divine sovereignty and absolute political sovereignty. And thus divine power is often "reimagined" in such a way that will, hopefully, undermine the centralization of sovereignty. Examples of such work will be offered below, but let the divergence from Schmitt's method be clear at this point. The new political theologians begin with a predetermined political end in mind and develop a theology in order to support or achieve that end. This should be clear from the theodical nature of Metz's theology. His theology is unabashedly attempting to address a specific, practical problem. He does not intend to offer a specific political program, but is essentially practical in his orientation.

Adjacent to the new political theology of Metz is the work of his friend Jürgen Moltmann. We may also include, within this same ambit, the work of liberation theologians, which emerged at basically the same time in Latin America. Black liberation theology in North America also appeared on the scene during this culturally tumultuous period of the 1960s. Of course none of these theologies arrive on the scene *ex nihilo*, but I have no interest in tracing the relative origins of these different movements here. It will

suffice, for the purposes of this chapter, to treat them under basically one heading, insofar as their basic orientation vis-à-vis the relation between theology and politics is shared.

I am indebted here to the work of Michael Ludwig Stemmeler in his comparison of political and liberation theologies, specifically in the works of Johann Baptist Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, Leonardo Boff, and Gustavo Gutierrez. In his analysis of the shared understanding of these four theologians he identifies the function of the gospel as a "socio-political energizer." That is, the gospel inspires and directs the believer in his or her social and political engagement, even if, admittedly, the Bible does not offer any specific program for political formation or action. Regarding Boff's work he writes: "The gospel proves itself to be a socio-political energizer which furnishes human beings with the courage to become active for change in the world."[128] Similarly Gutierrez emphasizes the primarily practical import of liberation theology as the biblical text is used to "conscientize" and "energize" the people, radicalizing them in their evangelization.[129] Stemmeler takes up a similar description of Metz's political theology as it "emphasizes the socio-politically energizing qualities of the gospel…"[130] and Moltmann's, which "leads toward socially relevant participation in history, which is nourished by the eschatological hope for the realization of the eschatological promises given by Jesus. The hermeneutical process leads from theory to praxis, to a 'new praxis of hope.'"[131] Stemmeler identifies a "slight bias toward an existentialist interpretation of the Bible" on the part of liberation theology as one primary substantive difference between these two schools.[132] However, it seems in many cases that "the difference lies mainly on the linguistic level and not on the level of the argument itself."[133]

Despite their differences, what they hold in common is an orientation towards the practical. There is also a commonality in their specific use of the Christian as the subject of political action. This new political theology is asking a new question, namely, how *ought* the Christian engage with the political world? It is more than a diagnosis, but an application of theological concepts to political questions. In this way, there is a somewhat Tillichian quality to this method. Tillich suggested that, in cultural theology, theology ought to offer answers to the questions raised by the culture. Similarly, this new political theology offers theological answers in response to political questions.

Metz identifies two central tasks of political theology, one negative and one positive. The first is stated thusly: "The deprivatizing of theology is the primary critical task of theology."[134] Whereas a more traditional theology focuses almost exclusively on the relationship of the individual to God, Metz attempts to offer a counterbalance by means of a theology that is directly oriented toward theology's socio-political implications. Secondly, it is the task of political theology to "formulate the eschatological message under the conditions of our present society."[135]

On the surface, it would appear that the new political theology is more overtly theological in its orientation. And in a certain sense that is true. But what occurs, often, in its application is that the appropriation of theological concepts to political questions functions on a purely rhetorical level. In other words, there is often no requisite faith operative in political theology. One need not occupy the subjective position of a believer in order to make use of, or even develop, such a political theology. Thus, as with Schmitt, the political theology on offer does not actually engage with the subjective position of the believer as such.

In an effort to offer a corrective for an overly-privatized theology, represented by "classic metaphysical theology," the new *political* theology overcompensates and can fall into the trap of trying to force a theological concept to have some direct political import. Whereas the old theology may have taken the notion of the "kingdom of God" and made it about the private salvation of an individual, the new political theology makes the inverse mistake of, for instance, taking the notion of the blessed Trinity and makes it about the co-equality of human persons living in a democratic society. I should emphasize that I do not necessarily find Metz himself to be guilty of this, but his program can lead to this abuse.

As an example, we may consider the "apocalyptic eschatology" of Metz. "[Metz's] appeal to apocalypticism . . . is a rhetorical device to inspire hope and creative political action."[136] Such a construal of apocalyptic faith can give way to a secularized theology of the "as if…" How might one live if they behaved "as if" the world would soon come to a cataclysmic end? One need not actually believe in anything, but needs only to ask the question of what potential consequences might flow from this or that belief. And, if they are perceived to be positive outcomes, then the political theologian will, as it were, syphon out the positive practical effects from the subjective epistemic-theological position.

This is not Metz's program, per se, but his successors have taken the movement of political theology in this direction. Yet Metz himself explains his apocalypticism thusly:

> Its promises are not an empty horizon of religious expectations; neither are they only a regulative idea. They are, rather, a critical liberating imperative for our present times. These promises stimulate and appeal to

> us to make them a reality in the present historical condition and, in this way, to verify them—for we must "veri-fy" them.[137]

I have no intention to impugn, or even to comment upon, the sincerity of Metz's faith, but there is a cynical undercurrent in this formulation that must be pointed out. He begins by denying a certain kind of liberalism in his theological perspective, yet by converting the eschatological *promise* into an *imperative* it would appear as if its status as a true promise has been altered. If it is our responsibility, spurred by theology, to "veri-fy," that is, to make-true, the eschatological promises, then what Metz implies is that it was ours all along. Theology, whether true or not in any objective sense, elicits a certain response in the human person. And for the political theologian's practical purposes, this human response is far more important than any independent veracity. The promises are true insofar as we live them out.

The emergence of this kind of semi-secular political theology is clearly evident in the works of Bonnie Honig, Regina Schwartz, Clayton Crockett, and others, which I will now review briefly. Honig's work received brief mention in the previous chapter, connected to the Schmittian problem of democratic legitimation. And so it is to that question that we will return here.

Bonnie Honig in Emergency Politics

The "old" political theology of Carl Schmitt is found lacking by liberal democratic theorists, such as Honig, because of its emphasis on sovereignty and its inability to legitimate a liberal democratic order. Honig, when confronted with what she refers to as the paradox of politics, does not aim at its resolution. This would require

offering some history or myth of origins to provide legitimacy to a political order—and only Schmitt, or an account like his, could provide this. And the fact that it is constantly recurring is, for her, generative of a new kind of politics. Given that the sequence of law making good people, and people making good law, regresses *ad infinitum*, she suggests that we are thrown into the sequence that has always already been in play.

Honig's project can in many ways be summed up as providing a liberal alternative to Schmitt's authoritarian politics. Where Schmitt attempts to resolve the paradox by embracing the notion of sovereignty, Honig instead moves in the opposite direction by embracing paradox and using it as a moment of opportunity for a new politics. Theological implications echo in both Schmitt and Honig, and it is that aspect to which we must now turn in order to achieve further clarification. Indeed, Honig challenges Schmitt (and his conception of sovereignty) directly in the realm of theology.

The theistic god, as Schmitt conceives it, creates order out of chaos, order out of pure *nihil*, by a pure act of sovereign will. What we now call nature, with all of its regularity and predictability, is not just a rote mechanism but is a reflection of the genuinely personal will of God. What we call the miracle is, therefore, the intervention of God into the order of nature—a suspension of the ordinary. But the miracle is enacted by God not to overthrow nature. Instead, nature is suspended for its own sake. In order for things to go on as normal, as they should, things must for a time be radically different; God must intervene directly. Therefore, the charge given to a monarch is: "Imitate the immutable decrees of the divinity."[138] Here we find the re-emergence of the Rousseauean lawgiver. The law must have a foundation in an absolute will, and furthermore, the

lawgiver must, from time to time, re-appear in order to rescue the law by its own suspension.

Honig, in wanting to rescue democracy from the Schmittian specter of dictatorship and totalitarianism, recognizes that we are compelled to make a turn to the theological to find our solution. She looks to a contemporary of Schmitt, Jewish theologian and philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, in order to supply an alternative theology with which to combat Schmitt's sovereign god. What Schmitt and Rosenzweig hold in common is a lamentation of the abandonment of theology and the turn towards atheism or deism. Thus, Rosenzweig's rebuttal to Schmitt is a compelling one: Is it not precisely because of the lack of evidence for an interruptive force that people have turned to atheism (and via the analogy, away from monarchy)? Belief in miracles has become basically impossible; thus the "notion of miracle as rupture, Rosenzweig suggests, is part of the apparatus that sidelines miracle."[139]

Rather than construing miracle as a "ruptural divine decision," Honig, following Rosenzweig, suggests that we conceive of it as "an ambiguous sign that thrusts upon humans the responsibility to receive it."[140] For Honig the miracle is not an intervention into, or a suspension of nature.[141] This interventionist model tends toward what Honig pejoratively refers to as magic—the unpredictable breaking of nature. True miracle is wrapped up in predictability, what we might call prophecy. For instance, what makes the parting of the Red Sea miraculous is not that God intervened supernaturally in order to make a way of escape for the Israelites. Despite the explicability of the event, it is the timing of the event and the people's orientation towards it that makes it properly miraculous.

What Honig thinks this means for politics is not exactly clear. Rosenzweig's introduction of the role of the people in the miraculous re-orients the center of politics on the *demos*. Here the emphasis lies on the responsibility of the people to respond to seemingly exceptional moments. In this way there is no need of an external sovereign to decide the exception. Instead, the people are oriented to perceive the exceptional case, and to use it as an opportunity to resist sovereignty in favor of popular action. To return to the example of the Red Sea, the issue is not that the laws of nature were suspended by a supernatural sovereign; what took place was that the Israelites gave a creative reinterpretation of the law of nature, such that they discerned in the events of the Exodus an arc of history which bends towards justice and liberation.[142]

It is perhaps to Rosenzweig's credit that his account of the miracle gives a role to the people. The democratic implication drawn by Honig is clear enough. But it is to his detriment that, ironically, his account leaves no room for God—at least not very much. God is relegated to the hand of Providence, but what this means exactly in terms of politics is very unclear. Certainly it is to be distinguished from the political deism in which God, the lawgiver, establishes order and everything operates mechanistically according to the original laws. Honig's immanent theology seems to offer the opportunity for novelty, but what is political Providence for Honig? What does God actually do? The clearest example of Honig's alternative theology is her use of the Talmudic narrative in which Rabbi Eliezer debates the Sages regarding a certain point of the law.

> Rabbi Eliezer went to great lengths to persuade his colleagues, but failed. Finally, he gave up persuasion and resorted to demonstration, saying: "If the law agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it!" The carob-tree moved a hundred cubits out of its place. (Others say, four hundred cubits.) Said the Sages: "No proof can be brought from a carob-tree."

> Again he said to them: "If the law agrees with me, let the stream of water prove it!" Whereupon the stream of water flowed backwards. Said the Sages: "No proof can be brought from a stream of water." Said Rabbi Eliezer: "If the law agrees with me, let the walls of the study hall prove it!" Whereupon the walls inclined to fall. But Rabbi Joshua rebuked the walls, saying: "When scholars are engaged in halachic dispute, what have you to interfere?" Hence they did not fall, in deference to Rabbi Joshua, nor did they resume the upright position, in deference to Rabbi Eliezer; and they are still standing thus inclined. Finally, Rabbi Eliezer said to his fellows: "If the law is as I say, may it be proven from heaven!" There then issued a voice which proclaimed: "What do you want of Rabbi Eliezer? The law is as he says!" Rabbi Joshua stood on his feet and said: "The Torah is not in heaven! . . . We take no notice of heavenly voices since You, God, have already, at Sinai, written in the Torah to follow the majority."[143]

Since Honig plays by Schmitt's rules her question is not, "Is this a good theological legitimation of democracy?" In fact, she admits that it is not a very good model for theology if we want to avoid a "proceduralized divinity." But a good theological model is not the concern of Honig, and is typical of this method of political theology. Instead she asks, "Is it a good model for a democratic politics?" Her answer is that it depends on the ending of the story. If the story is concluded by the claim that the Torah is not in heaven, "we might be left with a sense of unease about this legalistic *coup d'etat*."[144] The proceduralism expressed by Rabbi Joshua is not the kind of democracy that Honig is looking for because sovereignty would rest, at last, with the law. The important conclusion to the story comes when Rabbi Nathan asks the prophet Elijah what was God's response. Elijah tells him that God, "smiled and said: My children have triumphed over me, my children have triumphed over me."[145]

What is important, therefore, is not that the Law has shown itself to be self-sufficient to the point where even God's opinion is irrelevant. Honig is right, that is a terrible model for politics: a conservative constitutionalism that ultimately deprives the

demos of any power whatsoever. But, given the statement of God's delight over his own defeat, we can see that it is really the rabbis who have been victorious in their creative response to sovereignty. This tale teaches us the importance of, "[r]esisting the irresistible, demanding accountability from those who present themselves as beyond such demands, [and] taking exception to the exception. . ."[146]

In political terms might this represent an executive power of which the people are ever-watchful, always ready to oppose in the name of their own sovereignty? This appears to be what Honig is advocating, but in such a case one would be compelled to ask why such an executive is not dispensed with if he only represents a threat to popular sovereignty.

Honig sums up her Rosenzwegian perspective thusly:

> [S]overeign are they (prophetic are they) who declare the exception or refuse to and/or resist its invocation in the name of an openness to something beyond or apart from the norm-exception binary, something that might disturb or unhinge the binary. . . [T]he exception that revitalizes must itself break the norm-exception binary and the conception of vertical sovereignty that anchors it; it must be an exception, in short, that . . . "takes exception to the exception."[147]

But again we must ask what importance Honig's winsome God has for actual politics. We are fortunate that Honig's God delights in playful competition; of course earthly sovereigns are not always so benevolent. On Honig's reading, God invites debate and disagreement but earthly sovereigns do not.

She has attempted to beat Schmitt on his own terms by invoking an alternative theology but she fails because she has broken the first rule of Schmitt's project. Political theology is "not merely that kind of playing with ideas . . . which yields colorful symbols

and pictures."[148] What Honig lacks is the very thing that Schmitt so heavily emphasizes: "fundamentally systematic and methodical analogies."[149] Her metaphorical appropriation of theology has political correlates that are at best unclear and sometimes non-existent.

Regina Schwartz in The Curse of Cain

Similarly, Regina Schwartz in her book, *The Curse of Cain*, wonderfully uncovers the method at work within this most recent wave of political theology. The method she employs shows clearly how the attaining of a specific, predetermined political end drives the theological discourse. Theology itself becomes reduced to a plaything in the hands of political ideology. In her work, Schwartz turns to the narratives of the Hebrew Bible to understand how national identities are formed and constituted. At first sight, it may appear to be a more traditional Schmittian approach to political theology. Perhaps Schwartz is uncovering how the modern nation-state is a secularization of the theological concept of the chosen people and that our modern understandings of nationhood are rooted in this notion of a holy people. But when Schwartz takes her turn into a radical prescriptive theology, one realizes that this is something entirely different than Schmitt's project.

In collective identity formation, Schwartz wants to avoid two extremes: (1) "a circle that includes everyone—a whole that submerges and subjects all individuality to itself, a totality that closes possibility" and (2) "a part that reviles all other parts."[150] Schwartz presents these two models, what we might think of globalism and nationalism, as two divergent extremes that a potential third way can mediate between. Given that she seeks to avoid the totalization of the first model and the antagonism of the second she

must be imagining a network of identities that recognizes the legitimacy of (and perhaps even overlaps with) others but that still respects distinctiveness.

And so, for further insight, Schwartz turns to the Bible's 'modes' of corporate identity formation. According to Schwartz's reading, the Bible's problematic model of identity formation is based on the problem of scarcity. Everything is scarce, even the divine—after all, there is only *one* God. And because identity itself is scarce we are constantly engaged in violent conflicts as we attempt to define ourselves in relation to the Other. Schwartz, in response to this apparently problematic violence, suggests that we not only re-read Scripture, finding in it voices of plurality, non-identical repetition, and so on. She also recommends that we go one step further and engage in the process of re-writing Scripture, adding narratives that can better represent a diversity and multiplicity of identities.[151]

As her example, Schwartz focuses in on the Exodus narrative and the way in which it is repeated throughout the Bible. Even within the confines of the original Exodus narrative there is a multiplicity of angles. For instance, source criticism of the Pentateuch gives Schwartz reason to believe in a kind of primitive pluralism. "Historical-critical scholars. . . cannot explain why the editor let these explicit contradictions stand, with the result that there is no single, accurate account of what happened. . . But what is an apparent lapse by an otherwise painstaking editor/writer may be instead an invitation—to read the event as a memory."[152]

Outside the Pentateuch there are other creative forms of re-writing the Exodus. As one example, Schwartz offers the Joshua narrative in which the traditional Red Sea crossing is imitated by the crossing of the Jordan River. There is also Jeremiah's

supersession of the Exodus narrative by an eschatological hope of the end of exile. We may add also the North American examples of British colonists who saw the independence of the United States from England as an Exodus and the slaves brought to the continent from Africa who spoke of their own longing for deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

Schwartz, it seems, would approve of each of these narratives in that they fulfill her dream of an open and multiplying canon. "Non-identical repetition," she writes, "is a way out of the violence of congealing the past. When memories are non-identical, they do not coerce all stories into one story, and in theory, they do not coerce all members of a community into assenting to that one story. In theory."[153] And again, she writes: "In Genesis, there are two very different creation narratives. . . And what is to prevent further creation narratives, not just these two?"[154] But what Schwartz suggests, that the diversity of accounts within Scripture invites us to multiply the stories with our own inventions, leaves us with a clear indication that, for Schwartz, in the end there really is no Creation, only Creation stories.

Schwartz writes of multiplying the canon, but the very notion of canon is undone entirely by her proposal. Canon is, by necessity, communal and normative. Like the measuring stick, from which the term *canon* is derived, one cannot have a merely private definition of a yard. There is no such thing as a non-normative measurement of an inch. If there is nothing that determines that what two people might mean by a "mile" is the same, then the whole notion of the mile becomes useless. And so it is with this new political theology.

Because of my adherence to a particular faith community, I am bound to see the Creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2 as inspired, as, in some way or another, revelatory of a truth about God and the world. These stories molded and shaped the consciousness of the community to which I belong. But if Regina Schwartz writes her own Creation story, what is that to me? Or if, as Schwartz might suggest, every person creates his or her own Creation story, then what? Will this have undone the hegemony of the monomythic story that dominates our social consciousness? Perhaps. But it will have only replaced it with a new hegemony, a nihilistic hegemony in which all stories are subsumed by the assertion that no story is truer than another.

As with Honig, we can see in the proposals of Regina Schwartz, that this turn in political theology to try to create or develop theologies for purely political purposes is a dead-end. At its best this new political theology can utilize theology as an energizer for political action. But even to use it for that end requires that it be a theology concomitant with people's lived faith. That is why the new political theology, especially in its secular turn, is a total failure.

Clayton Crockett in Radical Political Theology

Perhaps the most paradigmatic example of what I find to be problematic among the new political theologians is to be found in Clayton Crockett's *Radical Political Theology*. Unlike many of these other thinkers, Crockett helpfully provides us with his definition of theology: a "theoretical reflection about religious phenomena."[155] Tellingly, it is here, and not in Schmitt's work, that we encounter the notion of "religion." Where theology deals with concepts, dogma, doctrines, and the like, religion is often understood

as being an embodied practice. What goes by the name of "political theology" may often be better understood as "political religion." For what these new political theologians are advocating for are not articles of faith, or doctrines, in any traditional sense but ideas and rituals that engender certain (political) practices. Thus they may more accurately be described as dealing with religion, because there is a more immediate concern with what people believe and how those beliefs are affecting their political engagement. Take Schmitt, on the other hand, whose method has little concern for what the contemporary person may actually believe. Instead what he uncovers is their implicit theological framework that is antecedent to or even operative within their political framework. This is in keeping with the "new" theological paradigm which, as Stemmeler describes it, is primarily concerned with the privatization of religion and seeks to offer a corrective to the 'silent' religion "which is not in critical dialogue with the socio-political reality."[156]

Crockett's concern, therefore, is explicitly to "engage with the tradition of radical theology in the United States as a potential counterweight to the intensification of conservative Christianity."[157] Crockett is not uncovering a theology, but creating one. He observes, and laments, how the Religious Right influences political decision-making in the United States and, unlike many other secularists, Crockett chooses to meet them on their own turf—the field of theology. And so Crockett is quite helpfully very upfront about his intentions. He describes it as "a political theology that criticizes liberalism not to salvage orthodoxy but as an attempt to save democracy in the form a radical democracy." More to the point, his aim is to "develop a radical political theology that would be neither orthodoxy [sic] theologically nor conservative politically."[158]

I appreciate Crockett's honesty. He states without ambiguity that specific political ends are determining his theological agenda. He wants to create a counter-conservative political movement, and he is employing theology as a tool for that end. And it is clear that theology is here only being utilized as a tool, because he does not indicate that a counter-conservative message is somehow derived *from* theology, but merely that theology can be used for this purpose, just as it can be used for a pro-conservative purpose. While I may find this use of theology to be problematic, I cannot fault it as being an incoherent project until I consider his overt opposition to orthodoxy. Not only does Crockett want to create a theological project that is non-conservative, but he wants it also to be non-orthodox. And this is rather baffling, as it raises with some intensity the question of for whom such a theology would even exist.

A more coherent project, though quite cynical, would be to directly and knowingly appeal to the theological commitments of Christians in order to pit them against Christian conservatism in the United States. If Crockett could drive a wedge between a Republican's commitments to conservative political ideology and Christianity, then one could thereby undermine the power of the Religious Right. But by also explicitly rejecting orthodoxy, Crockett loses the ability to appeal to Christianity in the mainstream. Crockett willingly surrenders that which would be his only strength—to marshal the weight of the Christian tradition against what he perceives to be a system worthy of undoing. But if he is also rejecting orthodoxy, then to whom is he appealing, besides those who are already predisposed to agree with his position? I cannot imagine a more impotent political project than an anti-orthodox political theology. Such a project has no power to persuade anyone. It has no dynamism. It is merely a restating of a pre-

existent political ideology in unnecessarily complex theological language, where, in the end, the appeal to theology accomplishes nothing by way of influence or insight. This kind of political theology saws off the branch on which it sits, because it is appealing to theology and yet simultaneously alienating the theologically-minded population.

Crockett, in advocating a "radical theology" is averse to theism as such and wants to develop an atheistic political theology. But even outside of the radical theology tradition, many of the new political theologies are averse to monotheism. In what remains of Schmitt's insights, the concept of the one true God appears to correspond to a consolidation of political power, and so many liberal or otherwise anti-conservative political ideologists desire to jettison monotheism. We see this instinct in the work of Regina Schwartz, above, and we may also include the works of Catherine Keller and Laurel Schneider.[159]

Not surprisingly, then, many political theologians, even of a more orthodox stripe, share this suspicion of monotheism because of its supposed political implications. And thus many turn to the doctrine of the Trinity as an attempted escape from the apparent problems associated with radical monotheism. The Trinity, it would seem, helpfully introduces multiplicity, heterogeneity, and diversity into the realm of sovereignty. There is perhaps some correspondence, then, between Trinitarian theology and democratic or liberal politics. This, at least is the argument of many contemporary Trinitarian political theologies to which we will now turn.

The New Trinitarian Political Theology

Slavoj Žižek

The most common connection drawn between the doctrine of the Trinity and political theology is the so-called "social doctrine of the Trinity." But before considering this in detail, I want to give a more extreme example of how the new political theology can appropriate trinitarianism. And here I turn to the fascinating and provocative writings of Slavoj Žižek. He could be categorized under the banner of "radical political theology," a la Clayton Crockett. Žižek's theology is certainly atheistic. And his political reading of trinitarian theology makes this very clear. One of Žižek's interlocutors, the Anglican Thomist philosopher and theologian John Milbank, has helped to identify a crucial difference between the classical orthodox perspective and Žižek's as a difference between paradox and dialectic. Theologically this disagreement manifests itself in how one understands the Trinity. Clearly, Žižek espouses a dialectical understanding of the Trinity, which is why it resembles Sabellian modalism. The Father passes into the Son and the Son gives way to the Spirit. Žižek's theology posits that the Incarnation is the exhaustion of God, and that the death/resurrection of Jesus is the end of the Son. But Milbank, in more orthodox fashion, is able to articulate the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in a way that maintains the paradox of both/and: both fully divine and fully human, both *Logos asarkos* and the Word-made-flesh.

For Milbank, as for Meister Eckhart, Christology functions in this way: if the Father is justice, then the Son is the just man.[160] For Žižek, in a dialectical mode, once

justice passes over into the just man, then we realize in retrospect that there never was justice-as-such, but always-only the just man. Justice-as-such is merely posited.

Perhaps this can be understood best when considering the Resurrection of Christ. To "reread Christ's resurrection in a materialist way" is to say that Cross and Resurrection are "strictly contemporaneous."[161] The Resurrection is not a separate historical event from the crucifixion of Jesus, it is a rereading of the Cross. Christological subjectivity passes over from the individual Jesus into the emancipatory collective, the Church. Jesus, strictly speaking, remains dead. The Cross and Resurrection are simultaneous. So also is the Resurrection and Pentecost. The death of Christ/God gives way to Žižek's ultimate conclusion: Resurrection-as-Pentecost, Pneumatology-as-Ecclesiology. In the Incarnation God became man, and in the death of Jesus God became the Spirit, that is, the community of faith.

Belief, then, for Žižek is neither literal nor metaphorical. God does not exist literally or die literally. But neither is God's existence (and death) a mere metaphor. Atheism and theism, in their naïve forms, both still presuppose a big Other, a symbolic network that guarantees meaning. What Žižek offers as an alternative (and why Žižek insists on theology) is that we must take hold of the responsibility for our lives and our decisions and refuse to rely on the big Other. Thus, in order for us to *effectively* escape the grasp of the big Other we must directly acknowledge it in its inexistence. The Holy Spirit is Žižek's name for this big Other that knows that it does not exist. The Holy Spirit is the community (the Church) that has passed through death (the Cross and Resurrection), which means it is the community that knows that there is no big Other, no

ontological guarantee of its meaning. As he said in his remarks given in 2011 to the Occupy Wall Street protesters.

> They are telling you we are not American here. But the conservative fundamentalists who claim they really are American have to be reminded of something: What is Christianity? It's the Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit? It's an egalitarian community of believers who are linked by love for each other, and who only have their own freedom and responsibility to do it. In this sense, the Holy Spirit is here now. And down there on Wall Street, there are pagans who are worshipping blasphemous idols.[162]

Here, in a short speech given to a major protest movement that has no natural sympathies for Christianity, Žižek wants the protesters to understand themselves as embodying the Christian hope. This is remarkable since, even in this same speech, Žižek is willing to openly disavow Communism. "We are not Communists . . . the only sense in which we are Communists is that we care for the commons."[163] Despite all that Žižek has had to say about the "Idea of Communism," his message to the masses is: We may not be Communists, but we *are* Christians. And this is crucial to understanding the function that theology performs for Žižek. It is not a mere playing with ideas, as if the parallels between a heterodox Christianity and his own philosophy are a happy coincidence. Nor is it just that he wants to use Christian language to appeal to a Christian audience; Occupy Wall Street was a secular movement. For Žižek the liberative project needs Christian theology. "Christianity and Marxism *should* fight on the same side of the barricade against the onslaught of new spiritualisms—the authentic Christian legacy is much too precious to be left to the fundamentalist freaks."[164]

For Žižek, therefore, the Trinity has radical political implications because the Trinity represents the coming to existence of a truly emancipatory collective. The Trinity,

as he understands it, is a kind of modalist expression of the death of God. There is no God, because God has been emptied into the community, and we call that the Holy Spirit. Christ, the Son, is a "vanishing mediator." He is the just man, who reveals justice, but then passes away—into the community. However, as fascinating and creative as Žižek's theological project is, I am sad to say it remains politically impotent. Those not already inclined to the Marxist, Hegelian, and Lacanian perspectives that Žižek brings will not be persuaded by the theological argumentation. Theology remains an addendum.

Even if Žižek authentically believes that Christianity brings about the historical possibility of this new kind of radical community (a big Other that recognizes its own non-existence) the possibility of such a community does not remain indebted to this theological language. The important kernel of truth can be extracted and the husk of creedal orthodoxy can be abandoned. But without the boundary markers of something like orthodoxy to define the community, then how can there exist an emancipatory collective to which Žižek refers? The Occupy protestors did not attach to the message of "We are Christians, not Communists." And of course they never would have, because outside of elite intellectual circles, Christianity is understood as having definitive content, and cannot be re-imagined as a radical, atheistic, revolutionary community. It is a strange critique to make against a Hegelian such as Žižek, but his theological perspective is simply ahistorical. The atheist revolutionaries at Occupy will not buy the "Holy Spirit" story; and the Christians in the pew on Sunday will not buy the atheistic revolution. And so Žižek's message is without an audience. And for the new political theology, which is oriented toward political action, to be without a base to motivate is a fatal flaw.

Jürgen Moltmann

Perhaps no other theologian is more associated with the possible relation between the doctrine of the Trinity and political theology than Jürgen Moltmann. One of his most significant works, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, outlines in extensive detail the precise nature of the relation between God's trinity and human relations. It hinges on a specifically 'social' reading of the doctrine of the Trinity, wherein the three Persons are more emphasized in their distinction than in their unity. This naturally opens the way for a parallel to be drawn between the relation of human persons and the relation of the divine Persons. This "social" interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity has approached something like the status of a new orthodoxy.[165] I will review, therefore, in greatest detail, the work of Moltmann on this topic.

For Jürgen Moltmann trinitarian theology is grounded in the experience of salvation. But for Moltmann this experience is with the God who suffers: "God suffers with us – God suffers from us – God suffers for us: it is this experience of God that reveals the triune God."[166]

The suffering of God stands unequivocally at the heart of Moltmann's theology. How else, Moltmann supposes, could the suffering of Christ be a saving event if it were not an event in the life of the God who suffers?[167] He finds no need to invoke a paradox of "the sufferings of the God who cannot suffer," since the impassibility of God is merely a Hellenistic premise to which Christian theology has no obligation.[168] For—"If God were incapable of suffering in every respect, then he would also be incapable of love."[169] "If God is love, then he does not merely emanate, flow out of himself; he also expects and needs love."[170]

And to speak of God suffering leads us, necessarily, *out* of "monotheism" and into trinitarian theology.[171] Moltmann's claim is that "the experience of the divine pathos inevitably leads to the perception of the self-differentiation of the one God."[172] This does *not* mean that Moltmann resolves the dilemma of the suffering God by suggesting that part of God suffers, and part of God does not. For, God is love and "to be completely itself, love has to suffer."[173] This does not limit God's freedom because "in loving the world he is entirely free because he is entirely himself."[174]

The suffering God is the God of love where love is understood as "the self-communication of the good." And "self-communication presupposes the capacity of self-differentiation. . . . He is the one who communicates and the one communicated."[175] So far Moltmann is in general agreement with the classical Christian tradition, which would claim that God's identity as Love is fulfilled in the mutual relationship between Father and Son. But Moltmann wants to push things a bit further, distinguishing the love between the Father and Son as "necessary" because it is "like for like," from the gracious love of one who is truly *other*—the world.[176] It is this gracious and free love for the world that defines God, and not the love between the Father and Son alone.

Here one can come to see how Moltmann conceives of human participation within the triune life of God. The Father and Son love each other, but their love is not free, thus God's love, and in that sense, God's very identity is incomplete. The divine love of Father and Son, for it to be perfect, must pour out to an Other. Creation, therefore, does contribute something to the life of God: the experience of being freely loved—something that the persons of the Trinity cannot accomplish for themselves. "[The world] exists because the eternal love seeks fellowship and desires response in freedom. That is why

we have indeed to see the history of creation as *the tragedy of divine love*. . ."[177] And it is a tragedy, because by opening himself up in love to the Other, God necessarily exposes himself to suffering.

> This means that the creation of the world and human beings for freedom and fellowship is always bound up with the process of God's deliverance from the sufferings of his love. . . . [T]he deliverance or redemption of the world is bound up with the self-deliverance of God from his sufferings. In this sense, not only does God suffer with and for the world; liberated men and women suffer with God and for him.[178]

Thus participation in the triune life of God occurs in a quite univocal sense. The Father and Son and Spirit create us to enter into fellowship with them and through their sufferings and our sufferings we participate one with another.

At this juncture it is crucial to grasp that, for Moltmann, God is not "Supreme Substance," as per Greek philosophy, nor is God "Absolute Subject," as per the existentialist philosophy of modernity. He writes: "In distinction to the trinity of substance and to the trinity of subject we shall be attempting to develop a social doctrine of the Trinity."[179] By this, Moltmann insists that the "unity of the divine tri-unity lies in the *union* of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, not in their numerical identity. It lies in their *fellowship*, not in the identity of a single subject."[180] Therefore, for Moltmann, participation in God does not have quite the Platonic ring to it that it carries in the classical Christian tradition. We may participate in God because God is a community of persons and we are, by virtue of the Incarnation, eligible members. We may participate in God much in the same way we may participate in a club or a family by applying for membership, or being adopted or married into it. Thus participation is two-fold. On the one hand, human community must imitate or resemble the divine community. But beyond

this, the human community must itself become members of the divine community: "a fellowship with God and . . . a fellowship in God."[181] This is why Moltmann insists that only a "social" understanding of the Trinity can ensure that God is open and communicable.[182]

Of special significance here is that this understanding of participation means that human participation in divinity adds something to God. As was already stated, God's intra-trinitarian love is, in some sense, deficient because it lacks the spontaneity and freedom that can only be given by one who is truly Other. So, the Son, qua *Logos*, offers the Father the love of like for like. However, the Son, qua *Imago*, that is, the Son as incarnate in the human Jesus, along with his "brothers and sisters" offer God the love of an Other.[183] "Through the incarnation of the Son *the Father* acquires a twofold counterpart for his love: his Son and his image."[184] The love that is constitutive of God's identity is inclusive of the "multifarious response of the Son's brothers and sisters. This means an increase of [the Father's] riches and his bliss."[185]

The point to be seen in all of this is that Moltmann's emphasis on the divine *pathos* and the subsequent understanding of the trinity as "social" leads him to an account of participation that maintains strict boundaries of exclusion. Participation for Moltmann is not mystical but quite mundane. The believer participates in God insofar as God is a community of persons, just as an athlete participates in a sports team insofar as a team is a community of athletes. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "*relationships of fellowship and open to the world*."[186]

The political implications of such an understanding of the Trinity are blatant. For if we are called to participate in, and thereby imitate, the divine community of equal

Persons, then both the Church and the world at large are compelled to organize themselves in such a way as to avoid hierarchy or domination. If, on the other hand, the Persons of God constituted an *identity* rather than a *unity*—that is, if we were "mere monotheists," as Moltmann puts it—then God would be the divine monarch, ruling over the world in his unparalleled sovereignty. And, as he explains,

> The notion of a divine monarchy in heaven and on earth, for its part, generally provides the justification for earthly domination. . . . The doctrine of the Trinity which evolves out of the surmounting of monotheism for Christ's sake, must therefore also overcome this monarchism, which legitimates dependency, helplessness and servitude. . . The doctrine of the Trinity . . . must for its part point towards a community of men and women without supremacy and without subjection.[187]

He even goes further to assert how this doctrine ought to impinge on the question of ecclesial hierarchy. He cites, somewhat mockingly, how a mere monotheism lends itself to a Roman Catholic ecclesiology, understanding the Church to be unified under the headship of the Vicar of Christ, in Rome: "one church—one pope—one Peter—one Christ—one God."[188] If we were truly Trinitarian, in the way in which Moltmann suggests, then a more "presbyteral and synodal" form of ecclesial hierarchy would be in order, for these are "forms of organization that best correspond to the social doctrine of the Trinity."[189]

However, such an unmediated application of the equality within God to equality within society requires a univocal understanding of being.[190] The three persons must constitute three instantiations of existence. Moltmann himself is explicit in this claim, as he explains that if the Trinity is to be a "*Trinity of love*," then the Persons must not only subsist, or even subsist-in-relation. They must *exist*. Citing Richard of St. Victor, he

writes: "A divine Person is a non-interchangeable existence of the divine nature." And only in this understanding, says Moltmann, "does the idea of the Trinity lose its usual static, rigid quality."[191] And these three, discreet instantiations of the divine nature are each passible and caught up with us in the tragedy of divine love.

Moltmann's understanding of God as ontologically passible is considered by many to be an advantage. It is imagined that it means God's relationship to the world is all the more intimate. For Moltmann the Trinity itself, in order to be what it is, namely, Love, is in need of an Other who can offer a gracious love, and not the love of necessity. The love internal to God is not sufficient for God to be God. In contemporary discussions of the issue it would seem that this spells an advantage for theologians like Moltmann who see God as really related to creation, and as suffering in his own divine nature.

The classical tradition's description of God's radical aseity and impassibility is often discounted because of this apparent rhetorical disadvantage.[192] But Moltmann's description of the Trinity as a community within which creatures can participate—while it attempts to allow for an intimacy between God and creation—actually reproduces the problem it sought to avoid. For if God is as Moltmann says, then just as there is always a certain externality to the three persons of the Trinity, how much more will the relationship between God and creatures be extrinsic.

For human beings, as interdependent, material beings, unity among persons can only be made possible in the love of a community of others. Two persons cannot become *truly one* without one of the persons being destroyed. This is the nature of human materiality. Moltmann mistakenly projects this imperfection of human love into the divine love, so that the Trinity is a community of mutually distinct and separately

existing persons. God's relationship to creation, therefore, cannot go beyond the love of mere community, which always falls short of perfectly intimate love.[193]

Contrast this with Thomas Aquinas' account of the indwelling Trinity. First of all, that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share a perfectly, numerically identical nature, means that participation in the triune God, by way of similitude, can only be described as *divinization* "because, by these acts of knowing and loving the intelligent creature *touches God himself*, by reason of this special way of being present we have the teaching that God is not merely in the intelligent creature, but dwells there as in his temple."[194]

Secondly, only through the radical ontological distinction between God and creatures, described in the classical tradition, can God be truly and perfectly intimate with creatures.

> Created essences are mutually impenetrable. The distinction between God and creatures, however, is not a distinction between two created essences or determinations but a distinction between two radically different ways of existing. . . . [B]ecause creatures exist only by participating in divine being, God is more internally present to a creature than it could be to itself.[195]

Precisely because God is so ontologically distinct from creation, God can achieve perfect intimacy with creation. As the classical theological tradition insists, following Aquinas and others, God is not merely a being in the world, but *ipsum esse* (Being itself). The degree of union that is possible between two finite beings is incredibly limited. One creature can only be united with another creature insofar as one or the other gives way. I cannot "have my cake" and "eat it too," as the saying goes. But God, as Being itself, in his relation to creatures, need not compete for the same space the way creatures must among themselves. God can therefore completely subsume a creature, without in any way

destroying or limiting it. Transcendence is therefore not the opposite of immanence, but its very ground of possibility. Precisely because God is so totally ontologically distinct from human beings, the relation between God and humanity can be uniquely intimate.

Moltmann, on the other hand, by modeling the Trinity on human community, actually sacrifices the ability to speak of a more radical, ontological intimacy. One might say that Moltmann maintains the upper hand because the God Moltmann describes suffers *in himself*, while the classical God is impassible by nature. But Moltmann's advocacy for passibility, once again, reproduces the problem that it seeks to avoid. For if passibility is attributed to the divine nature itself then, "God no longer shares in the suffering of the assumed humanity, but rather suffers in complete separation from humanity."[196] For the classical tradition, God is, according to the divine nature, impassible; however, because God has assumed a human nature in the hypostatic union of two natures in the one person of Jesus Christ, then the *Person* of God does indeed suffer, and the suffering he experiences is nothing other than *human* suffering. The divine Person does not suffer in himself, but in the otherness of human nature.[197] If we are to ever overcome suffering and evil, then these must be totally absent in the God with whom we will share eternity. God's impassibility is our eternal safe haven from the tribulations of this life. If God is in pain as well, then God is also in need of a savior.[198]

The recurring problem, therefore, and the object lesson we can learn from Moltmann's political doctrine of the Trinity, is that one cannot move from a doctrine such as the Trinity to the question of its political import without mediation. To ask the doctrine of the Trinity to provide us with a model for a political community of equals is to ask of it something that it was not *intended* to give. To attempt to apply trinitarian

theology directly to questions of politics or social ethics will inevitably result in a distortion of the doctrine under consideration. This is especially true in handling questions related to the doctrine of God, for such a haphazard correlation of politics and theology assumes that God and creatures can be spoken of univocally. And when the doctrine under consideration is perverted, and turned towards an end to which it was not intended then the entire theological enterprise will miss its mark. This should be abundantly clear from the examples given above showing that Moltmann's attempts to *politicize* trinitarian theology end up reproducing the theopolitical problems they are trying to avoid.

Leonardo Boff

Similar to Moltmann, Leonardo Boff works to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity in a social way, with social and political implications. He opens his major work on trinitarian theology by enumerating three reasons for studying the doctrine of the Trinity. The first is to inquire into the nature of God; the second is to draw nearer to the self-revelations of God in the Son and the Spirit. These both are ordinary and non-controversial Christian claims. The third he names, however, seems markedly different. The third reason for studying the doctrine of the Trinity is that "we need to know what type of society accords with God's plan."[199] And why is it that the Trinity can answer this question? Because "the Trinity can be seen as a model for any just, egalitarian (while respecting differences) social organization. On the basis of their faith in the triune God, Christians postulate a society that can be the image and likeness of the Trinity."[200] Citing approvingly of Moltmann's work, Boff writes: "God is a community of Persons and not

simply the One; God's unity exists in the form of communion (common-union) between the three Persons and with history."[201]

Boff's description of the Trinity is grounded in God as Mystery.[202] Theology, then, is a subsequent reflection on the encounter with this Mystery. "So, saying that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is faith; saying that God is one nature and three Persons is an explication of faith."[203] Boff laments that the classical formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity can treat the Trinity as a "*mysterium logicum*" rather than a "*mysterium salutis*" but it seems to me that Boff's social understanding of the Trinity removes all mystery altogether.[204] To use the term "Person" as univocal in God does not invoke mystery, or transcendence, but instead reduces God to a being among beings, or worse yet, God may become three beings among beings.

This ontotheological perspective is betrayed by the fact that, like Moltmann, Boff places the doctrine of the Trinity as residing somewhere between "polytheism" and "monotheism."[205] To conceive of the triune God as anything other than the one God is undoubtedly a betrayal of the core convictions of the traditional explication of this doctrine. No Nicene Father would have ever dreamt of identifying as anything other than a monotheist; nor would they, as Boff does, cite Egyptian and Indian mythological triads as pre-Christian revelations of the Trinity.[206] In fact many of the lengths to which trinitarian theology has gone is precisely to preserve, undeniably, the monotheism of the Christian faith.

Boff invokes analogical predication, insisting that, "[a]pplied to the Trinity, our terminology can have only analogical and indicative meaning; our words hide more than they reveal."[207] Yet if the subsisting relation among the divine Persons is at best

analogical vis-à-vis created human relations, then how is it that the "community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit becomes the prototype of the human community dreamed of by those who wish to improve society and built it in such a way as to make it into the image and likeness of the Trinity."[208] In fact, Boff seems to hold such reservations about *identifying* the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with one another, that when he describes the "analogical" nature of the term Person in God, he uses it to express a radical difference *between* the divine Persons.

He indicates that Father, Son, and Spirit are so unique and distinct that we can hardly use the same term to describe each of them. "[L]ogically, we should use one word for the Father, another for the Son and another for the Holy Spirit, since each of them is unique. Yet I shall continue to use the term 'persons' applied to all three, as tradition and the whole of theology have done, because there is no better alternative."[209] How telling it is that Boff finds it less problematic to speak in the relative equivalence of personhood in God and humanity than among the Persons themselves.[210]

Central to Boff's argument is that the equality of Persons (even in their radical distinctiveness) in God is what serves as the model for human community. Therefore, "the values implied in [democracy] constitute the best pointers to how to respect and accept trinitarian communion."[211] This is a direct correlate of Boff's conviction that "strict monotheism" leads to totalitarianism.[212] He acknowledges, in keeping with Carl Schmitt's political theological analysis, that the relation between these two is not unidirectional, but that there is a mutually supportive dialectical relationship between the unification of political power and absolute monotheism. However, where Boff departs entirely from the very nature of Schmittian political theology, is in his claim that:

> These political and religious distortions could be thoroughly corrected by a return to the triune God of Christians. … Dictators and tyrants could never draw arguments to legitimize their absolutism from the God-Trinity . . . . This complete communion of three Persons … destroys the figure of the one and only universal Monarch, the ideological underpinning of totalitarian power.[213]

Not only does Boff's argument here demonstrate a failure to understand the non-causal relation between theology and politics, but it is simply remarkably naïve. The idea that the symbolic power of totalitarian political regimes could be toppled by the people's faith in the non-identical communion of Persons in the one God seems a clear overstatement. And it is basically demonstrably false that "dictators and tyrants could never draw arguments to legitimize their absolutism from the God-Trinity." J. Kameron Carter, as merely one example, would take direct objection to this claim as he argues that trinitarianism, in fact, fueled the drive toward domination in the West during the period of colonial expansion.[214] Christopher Columbus, as Carter shows, repeatedly invoked the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Of course, Boff would not be persuaded by this counterexample because of his fallacious arguing that any system that supports domination or exploitation, despite its claims, cannot be *truly* trinitarian.

It seems Boff's most notable difference from Moltmann is his difference in inflection and emphasis, working as he did in the context of 1980s Latin America. Boff is a liberation theologian in the classical sense, in a way that Moltmann would never think or claim to be. Yet even here Boff cites Moltmann with great approval: "[O]nly a humanity that is whole, united, and unifying, free of class domination and dictatorial oppression, can claim to respect the trinitarian God."[215]

Miroslav Volf

Miroslav Volf does much to recognize some of the problematic dimensions of social trinitarianism. In conversation with Erik Peterson, he acknowledges that there is indeed a limit to the correspondence between human community and intra-divine love. He writes, "God's triune nature remains a mystery that human beings can only worship but not imitate."[216] However, he is quick to counter that Peterson has taken this principle too far and "there must in created reality still be broken creaturely correspondences to this mystery of triunity."[217] And it is precisely the nature of these correspondences that Volf hopes to uncover. To his credit, he also tempers some of the outlandish claims of Boff, recognizing that there is no historical contradiction between trinitarian faith and imperialist politics. "This is why one should not expect too much of any reconceptualization of the doctrine of the Trinity, however necessary it may be."[218]

I also commend Volf for primarily limiting his social analysis of trinitarian theology to the area of ecclesiology. It is in the Church, primarily through the trinitarian rite of baptism, that human beings most clearly and visibly participate in the triune God. Therefore, if we are to think of any human collective obtaining to a correspondence with the Most Holy Trinity, then surely it would be in the Church, and not just in democratic society, as per Boff.

However, for all of his great respect for the classical tradition, and his engagement with Ratzinger (though he is more dependent on Zizioulas) he departs from the classical Western tradition in surprising and problematic ways. He even says, for instance, that "it is advisable to dispense entirely with the one numerically identical divine nature."[219] And why does he reject this pillar of trinitarian theology? It seems, in

part, because there is no creaturely correspondence to such a notion. That three divine Persons can share one numerically identical nature militates against any possibility of analogy to the interpersonal relationships of creatures. It thus becomes fruitless to try and contemplate how the persons are distinguished if they are identical to the same divine nature.[220] Yet, for the classical tradition, in God alone relationality and substantiality coincide. This is because of the uniquely perichoretic relation of the three Divine Persons: each exists entirely in the other. For creatures, to be reduced to mere relationality is a limitation; to reduce a human being to their relation as parent, child, student, etc., is necessarily dehumanizing. Yet, the Divine Persons precisely are subsisting relations.

But one may well ask Volf, if the three Persons do not share a numerically identical nature, then what do they share? If we say that they share a mere common nature, as I intuit that Volf intends, then what are the three divine Persons but three instantiations of a species of being that we call divinity? God merely becomes a kind of being that something can be. And this sort of degradation and reification of God is what must be avoided at all costs.

Similarly, Volf also rejects the centrally important notion of the divine Persons as subsisting relations. If each divine Person is not a self-standing subject, in the modern sense, then God's relationship to us is merely "unitary."[221] But the classical tradition has always held, without any embarrassment, that God is one in his operations *ad extra*. There is an appropriation of certain works to Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, but we cannot, from a creaturely perspective, divide divine works such that we say that the Father alone

did this or that, or the Spirit alone did such and such. Such a division of persons, as Volf and the others are suggesting, is simply not monotheistic.

As to Volf's understanding of the social implications of the doctrine of the Trinity, he refers back to Regina Schwartz's *Curse of Cain* to show the deleterious effects of monotheism. "[S]he rightly claims that any understanding of divinity centering on the singleness of an omnipotent subject will tend to forge 'hard' identities and foster violence."[222] The Trinity offers an alternative to this problematic monotheism. And so Volf goes on to outline how "ecclesial persons" can draw from the "divine Persons" a model for their own personhood. What we can learn from the divine Persons is that we "cannot live in isolation from one another."[223] Friendship and love, especially experienced within the Church, is a foretaste of our eschatological participation in the communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[224]

Critique

To close out this chapter, let me offer a general critique of the social doctrine of the Trinity, specifically, as well as of this method of political theology more generally. In chapter four I will offer my own, more detailed reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity, from both an historical and systematic perspective.

A central problem with the social analogy of the Trinity is that it is so obsessed with imitation of the divine life that it fails to adequately account for the Creator-creature distinction. That God, as Trinity, is eminently self-knowing and self-loving, does not mean that, by extension, we too ought to seek only to know and love ourselves, just as God only knows and loves himself. This method of doing theology is, frankly, atheistic in

its orientation. It sees as impossible any actual *relation* between God and humanity and instead God, in an unabashedly Feuerbachian way, can serve no other purpose than as a model for human striving. That God supremely knows and loves himself does not mean that we only ought to know and love ourselves, but that we too should seek to know and love *God* above all else. And this is the theological failure of this method of political theology. Human relations to God, if they are addressed at all, are subsumed by the relation of imitation. God is only a model for human living, and in whatever ways we cannot imitate God, then such a description becomes useless and should be dispensed with.

In surveying the works of some social trinitarians, I have already mentioned some other theological criticisms that ought to be raised, but perhaps most central is the issue of ontotheology and the univocity of being. The social doctrine of the Trinity hinges on the ease with which we may speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as existent persons, persons in a qualitatively identical way to human beings. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit become, in short, three divine beings. But perhaps this is a cheap shot, seeing as none of the above mentioned theologians would openly or intentionally advocate such a heretical articulation. So laying aside the charge of tritheism, which by now seems almost cliché when rebutting this doctrine, allow me to take up the more fundamental problem, namely, that God is conceived of as a mere being.

The scope of this project does not allow for a full discussion on the debates regarding the univocal versus analogical predication of being in God. However, let me add this one bit of critique to what I think is an altogether problematic way of carrying out the task of Christian theology. To conceive of God as merely *a being in* (or even,

somehow, spatially outside) *the universe* is very convenient if one's intention is to extract from God specific patterns or models for imitation. And this is, quite apparently, the theological agenda of many today. Thus it is no surprise that the classical divine attributes such as impassibility, omnipotence, simplicity, aseity, omniscience, timelessness, and so on, are all under suspicion or considered already passé.

However, it seems to me that this personalist way of conceiving of God is what has opened wide the floodgates of the "new atheists" who reject as childish and naïve that anyone should believe in a cosmic wizard living somewhere out there beyond the stars.[225] Having rejected the reality of such a deity, some may attempt to salvage the task of theology by simply asserting that it doesn't really matter in the end whether such a God existed or not, but rather that in our description of God we have devised some human ideal towards which we can strive. And in so doing we have arrived at the problem implicit in this "new political theology." To renew our ability to speak meaningfully about God one must return to the ancients who taught us of our *inability* to speak about God. Analogical predication of being, as taught by Thomas Aquinas, reminds us that when we speak of God's *being* or God's *personhood* or any other aspect of the divine reality, we are speaking of a reality that has an even great dissimilarity than similarity to our own.

As it relates to the new, post-Schmittian, political theology, much of the work in social trinitarian theology is a perfect exemplification of the shortcomings of this method. The entire project seems to be like planting evidence at a crime scene.[226] So-called radical monotheism is rejected because of its authoritarian implications, and so the theologian sets out to articulate a doctrine of God that expresses community, solidarity,

exchange, or any other such term.[227] When the doctrine of the Trinity is expressed in this new, social way, then it is taken as a reason why Christians ought to support political structures that uphold community, solidarity, and so on. This circular reasoning is a consistent problem for Honig, Schwartz, and many others who try to leverage theological ideas in this sort of way. If a theologian sets out with the purpose of finding or reconfiguring a doctrine to suit a preconceived notion, political or otherwise, why should anyone find any interest in the fact that they accomplished their task?

As Karen Kilby summarizes the social trinitarian thesis: "In the hands of these thinkers, then, the claim that God though three is yet one becomes a source of metaphysical insight and a resource for combating individualism, patriarchy and oppressive forms of political and ecclesiastical organization."[228] But this, as Kilby rightly notes, is a totally circular way of arguing. If someone explicitly sets out to formulate a doctrine in such a way that it will harmonize with socialism, feminism, or any other ideology, it is quite silly to see that newly formulated doctrine as a reason to support the ideology in question. Such a political theology is hardly anything more than politics with a complicated and superfluous theological justification. Unless there is an acknowledgment that there is a truth contained in theology, a truth that may not conform to my expectations or desires, then such a theology is projection of the most cynical kind.

Kilby's assessment of social trinitarians being implicated in a vicious projectionism is a devastating critique. She contrasts, as an example, the social Trinity of Moltmann with that of Patricia Wilson-Kastner. One point on which they diverge is whether the three divine Persons first exist as self-possessed beings, which then come into community, or if the Persons are constituted in relation as such. Wilson-Kastner

affirms the former, while Moltmann the latter. Why do they differ? Kilby offers this answer:

> The most likely account of the difference, it seems to me, is that while Wilson-Kastner has her eyes on the danger to women of lacking a sense of self and so emphasizes that each of the persons is "self-possessed," Moltmann is focused on the excessive individualism of the modern West and so maintains that the persons are constituted by their relationships. To adjudicate the difference, then, one would need to decide whether, all things considered, it is better for us to think of ourselves as self-possessed and going out into relationships, or as entirely constituted by our relationships. Once that question has been settled, the Christian theologian can then say, that is how God is too.[229]

Kilby's account lays bare the shallowness of such a theological method. She also will readily admit that a degree of projection is inevitable in theological thinking. Call it *analogia*. However, there is something especially pernicious about this method, because it not only relies on analogies, which are always imperfect, but supposes that the distinctive features that the analogy has introduced are in fact the most important and exciting elements of that which the analogy is trying to explain. The counter-example she gives is St. Anselm's atonement theory that is indebted to an analogy with feudal systems of honor and debt. While he does make use of this as a means of illustration, he does not argue that these concepts are the "heart of the doctrine," in the way, for instance, that social trinitarians have the tendency to argue that notions of mutuality, egalitarianism, or the like, are at the heart of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Conclusion

To briefly summarize the previous two chapters up to this point, we have now considered two different approaches to political theology, and shown how each of them has treated the doctrine of the Trinity. In the first chapter I reviewed the Schmittian mode

of political theology, which examines the genealogical relation between political and theological concepts, demonstrating that modern political concepts are secularized theological concepts. Therefore, there is not just an historical, but also an ongoing analogical relation between theology and politics. This approach, while meritorious in its own way, cannot satisfy the pressing question of how Christians *ought* to engage politically.

In this second chapter, then, I examined the "new" political theology that is more immediately intended for political application. This post-Schmittian mode of political theology claims that because of the unique relationship between political and theological concepts, that an intentional modification of theology will produce a change in the political landscape. But this, as we have seen, oversimplifies the relationship between theology and politics. There is not a simple causal relation between the two, such that altering one will automatically cause a change in the other. While I would consider the Schmittian project to have notable limitations, my assessment of this new political theology is far more negative. It distorts the theological tradition and also does not reflect an adequate understanding of the political context—assuming that revised and updated theologies can have some kind of social engineering effect.

In short, we are in need of a political theological method that acknowledges the legitimate insights of Carl Schmitt, and builds on it in a practical way, while avoiding the pitfalls of the tradition reviewed in this chapter. Schmitt cannot, and is not intended to supply us with a theologically informed model of political engagement for the believer. Metz, et al, attempt to provide such a model but fail in other significant ways. In the following chapter, therefore, I will articulate a method for political theology that

preserves the integrity both of the Christian theological tradition as well as respecting the relative autonomy of the socio-political sphere.

PART II

TOWARD A TRINITARIAN POLITICAL THEOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL THEOLOGICAL METHOD

Introduction

In the first two chapters, I reviewed the two most prominent approaches to so-called political theology and also considered how these political theological methods have addressed the question of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, in this the third chapter, I will shift to a more constructive project as I outline a positive proposal for political theological method. The method that I espouse here will seek to draw the best insights from both the Schmittian and liberationist traditions. If, as I claim, Christian political theology is *a mode of Christian theology intending Christian political praxis*, then its work is two-fold. First it must analyze the implicit theology already at work in political society; secondly it must guide Christian political praxis in the light of Christian theology, serving as a mediating theory between Christian theology and Christian political praxis. The first of these tasks of political theology is akin to the approach of Carl Schmitt, while the latter is that put forward as a method by many liberation theologians.

To begin this chapter I will consider an approach to doctrine as a kind of grammatical rule for speech about God within a community of faith. This post-liberal approach seems commendable, so long as one rejects any reductionist view, such that theology is *only* a regulation of speech and not anchored in the truth about reality. The former does not exclude the latter.

If this revised post-liberal approach to doctrine is granted then new avenues for political theology are available. Every socio-political community is held together by a certain meta-narrative and is thus regulated by a kind of grammar. Therefore the theologian can engage in a narrative-critical comparison of the Church and the State because they are similarly regulated by a certain kind of cultural-linguistic "rule." Theology offers a culturally mediated metanarrative and sets the boundaries for a community's discourse about the highest end and common good, called God. Because politics is always oriented toward some highest end or common good, it is therefore always engaged in some sort of theology. Theology is always political and politics always theological, without one being reduced to the other. As Luke Bretherton has put it, "[T]alk of God and talk of politics are coemergent and mutually constitutive."[230]

The task of political theology, in this more-or-less Schmittian mode, involves a "comparative phenomenology," as we see in the recent works of William Cavanaugh and Paul Kahn. These theorists are able to see theology as operative not just in a political concept's *history*, but in its ongoing *application*. That is, modern political concepts are not merely derivative of older theological concepts, but remain deeply theological in themselves. But this is not political theology's only task.

In part two, following also the methodologies articulated in the tradition of Latin American liberation theology by Clodovis Boff and Juan Luis Segundo, one must also say that political theology must guide Christian political praxis in the light of Christian theology, serving as a mediating theory between theology proper and political praxis. In view of this task, political theology is to be seen as residing at the intersection of two essential moments, which Boff describes as hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations.

Boff regards political theology as consisting of form and matter, where the theological content provides the form, and the political content provides the matter.

Hermeneutic mediation, therefore, refers to a sophisticated interpretation of Christian doctrine—the preparation of the theological *form*, which is to confront the contemporary political situation. Socio-analytic mediation refers to a scientific and concrete analysis of that contemporary political situation. This is the raw data that theology must address, but theology, as theology, cannot prepare or analyze this content. Thus political theology serves as a product of the mediation between theological hermeneutics and social analysis.

The methodological work of this chapter will prepare the way for the application of this method in the remaining chapters. Chapter four will take up the work of hermeneutic mediation, chapter five of socio-analytic mediation. In the sixth and final chapter I will offer a clarifying explanation of the complex relation between trinitarian and political theology, which draws upon these two mediations, as well as the comparative phenomenological insights of Schmittian political theology.

Political Theology as Comparative Phenomenology

What is Theology?

Before defining and elaborating upon the nature and method of political theology, something must first be said by way of a definition of theology as such. My intention is not to give a thorough defense of what I take to be the task of theology. But, for the sake of clarity, I will articulate what I presuppose as a basic understanding of the nature of theological discourse.

Theology is, as the word itself indicates, the science of God. Further, it is the science of God, and of all things *sub ratione Dei* [under the logic of God]. Since all things have some relation to God, then all things are properly treated under theology (though not in the same way that they would be treated by other sciences). Theology is similar to other sciences insofar as it has "principles" from which further truths are derived. Such principles are not proved by the science itself, but presupposed within it. In the case of theology, these first principles are the articles of faith, the datum of divine revelation. Thus, as St. Thomas Aquinas will say, the one who intends to doubt the articles of faith should not expect any satisfying "proofs" from the theologian. "If our opponent believes nothing of divine revelation, there is no longer any means of proving the articles of faith by reasoning, but only of answering his objections—if he has any—against faith."[231]

Two essential qualities of theology, especially relevant to the subject of this dissertation are, first, its dignity as a science of divine revelation, and, second, its particularity as a norm for governing the discourse of a community, namely, the Church. And these two aspects of theology are interdependent. But let us begin by elaborating on the latter, that is, the necessarily communal nature of theology.

George Lindbeck's work on the nature of doctrine is helpful to illuminate the various ways in which this question can be treated. One way to approach the nature of doctrine Lindbeck refers to as the cognitive model: "doctrines function as informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities."[232] A second model views doctrine as "noninformative and nondiscursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations."[233] The former may be paralleled with terms such as "scientific" and

"objective," whereas the latter is to be thought of as "artistic" and "subjective." The former is classically conservative, the latter classically liberal. As an alternative to both symbols and propositions, Lindbeck offers that doctrines ought to be understood as rules. This is certainly *not* to say that doctrines are without propositions, but doctrinal propositions are a second-order discourse. That is to say, doctrines "affirm nothing about extra-linguistic or extra-human reality."[234]

I would stake my own position as a moderated version of Lindbeck's third way. I agree that theology is not adequately treated as either an articulation of *Gefühl* [feeling], nor as a simple restatement of propositions that are dumbly true. Against both of these attitudes, I would make appeal to the apparent mindset of the first apostles as witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus. They clearly were not attaching merely symbolic language to an epiphany regarding the meaning of life and the love of one's neighbor. This would not adequately account for the radicalism of their witness, and the mocking opposition they faced from both Jewish and Greek intellectuals. The *Gefühl schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit* [feeling of Absolute dependence] does not create the scandal that the Apostles did.

Yet, at the same time, their claim regarding the resurrection of Jesus cannot be treated merely as a question of the geographical location of the body of Jesus. The bodily ascension of Jesus into heaven was not, for the Apostles, and should not be for us, a question of cosmology. Rather, Christ's resurrection and ascension are brimming with meaning regarding Jesus' lordship, his relation to the Father, and so on. Thus the Apostle Paul can write, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."[235] Here the Apostle is not setting

a "low bar," but rather implying that a world of meaning is contained in the simple phrase, "Jesus is Lord," and in the notion that "God raised him from the dead."

Against Lindbeck's alternative, one must also retort that the radical wedge between language and reality is unjustified. According to John Milbank, this philosophical turn away from metaphysics is actually just the introduction of a new, implicit metaphysics rooted in nominalism. This he calls an ontology of violence. "If, indeed, there are no objective standards of truth and goodness … then every act of persuasion is an act of violence."[236] Be it the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*, Nietzche's will to power, Darwin's survival of the fittest, or Marx's historical lens of class conflict, the fundamental ontological principle of the post-Christian world, for Milbank, is that of conflict and violence. Without the ontological grounding of God, "in whom all things hold together,"[237] and without classical, Platonic notions of ontological participation, then all reality must necessarily be in competition.

So, contra Lindbeck, I side with John Milbank's response that, "One has to pass from Lindbeck's 'Kantian' narrative epistemology . . . to a 'Hegelian' metanarrative which is a 'philosophy of history.' . . . [And a] metanarrative requires a speculative ontology to support its meta-status."[238] Milbank's endorsement of Hegel is obviously limited, for both Hegel and Marx are unable to, at last, break the cycle of violence. All that can be offered by the *civitas terrena* is a limiting of violence.[239] This is why Augustine speaks of an *altera civitas*, the *civitas Dei*. To choose ontological realism, therefore, is not arbitrary, since it is *the* alternative to nihilism.[240]

> [N]ihilism is the conclusion of 'pure reason' (reason in the mood of cold regard), not just to the void or to ontological violence, but also to the ontological reign of non-sense or unreason. This was Nietzsche's central

> tragic crux: fully honest Western reason realizes that reason itself is but a pathetic human projection.[241]

Alternatively:

> Reason, for Catholic tradition, 'goes all the way down'—it is consistent with the infinite and it leaves behind no residue of chaos. . . It then follows that to 'choose' the Augustinian metanarrative and an Augustinian ontology of peace is also to 'elect reason,' to fulfill the ineradicable bias of the human mind towards meaning . . . in the sense that this choice alone allows one to say that reason is ontologically ultimate.[242]

Regarding the nature of doctrine, therefore, Lindbeck's claim that theology is a grammatical regulation of discourse about God, embedded in a community of practice appears phenomenologically true. But Lindbeck's thesis cannot be accepted if it is taken to imply a disjunction between reality and language. I affirm theology to be a set of rules for communal discourse, however, from within such a community, it cannot be reduced to a mere game. Rather, with the eyes of faith, theology's object is infallible divine revelation. Theology is a task of a community, but it is necessarily of a community of faith. In the case of Christian theology, that community is the Church.[243]

The Church, of course, is not the only theological community and therefore Christian theology is not the only theology there is. To refer to the theology of non-theistic "religions" is contestable, still the term is not without use. But if theology is a communal discourse about God arising from a community of faith, then the term theology has as much breadth as do the terms "God" and "faith." To define theology, therefore, one needs a pre-theological definition of God. For example, to strictly define (as opposed to *identify* God) as "a being than which no greater can be conceived," would be to say that all non-Anselmians are also non-theologians. Rather, we should strive for a

definition of God that can contain within itself whatever the various theological traditions have identified as God (or some other equivalent term). And the most sufficient pre-theological definition of God would surely seem to be that of Paul Tillich: God is the Ultimate, and faith is the state of being ultimately concerned.

However, one must confess that such a use of the term theology is regrettably equivocal. Broadly, one can say "theology" is the regulation of the discourse about the ultimate concern. But the term is often used more particularly to refer to Christian theology. And rather than constantly qualifying theology as Christian, or Catholic, or classical, or orthodox, I (as most do) often refer simply to "theology." Therefore, when I critique many political theologies as being "insufficiently theological," it must be understood that I am there referring to theology in this second sense. In the broader sense, of course, all political theologies are deeply theological because they all spring from a deep-seated faith, a high level of commitment to an ultimate concern.

When I say, then, that it is insufficiently theological, the critique is rather to say that it has abandoned or betrayed the norms of the theological tradition of which it is attempting to make use. For instance, to write for and as a Catholic, and yet to recklessly appropriate, alter, subvert, or even neglect the tradition in the service of some other ideology could warrant the critique of having become no longer theology. In this case, what is meant is that it is no longer Catholic theology, but it remains deeply theological insofar as it is religiously committed to its ideological agenda.

If theology is the operation of a community of faith then other communities of faith, besides the Church, can and do produce other theologies. This is an obvious claim in the context of other world religions. But, I will argue, the notion of comparative

theologies can reach far beyond the standard set of religions such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. As the works of William Cavanaugh, Timothy Fitzgerald, and many others have brilliantly illustrated, our definition of "religion," by which we attempt to draw boundaries between some discreet religious sphere and another secular sphere essentially obscures more than it clarifies.

The nature of Schmittian political theology has already been considered at length in the previous two chapters. But it is worth reviewing here for the sake of clarity. By political theology, in the mode and manner of Carl Schmitt, we mean a study of the genealogical relation between theological concepts and "modern theory of the state." But political theology *also* includes an investigation of the ongoing, reciprocal, relationship between these theological and political concepts. As Paul Kahn notes, "Political theology as a form of inquiry is compelling only to the degree that it helps us recognize that our political practices remain embedded in forms of belief and practice that touch upon the sacred."[244]

And, as I noted in chapter two—contrary to what I have dubbed the post-Schmittian political theology—the concern of political theology is not with causal relations between political and theological concepts. Again, Kahn is illuminative here:

> Politics is not a matter of realizing the truth of an idea, and getting your theory right may have little to do with practical politics. . . . The social imaginary, which holds ideas and practice in a reciprocal unity, is not something "in our heads" but in the world, in the same way that language is in the world. If we ask how it got there, we must turn to genealogy; if we ask how it maintains itself, we must turn to a study of its "systematic structure."[245]

These two levels of inquiry, the genealogical and the systematic, are the core of the political theological task according to Schmitt. For those interested in moving beyond theory and into praxis (where questions of causality must come into play) then one must look beyond the theological apparatus of Carl Schmitt.[246] This will be the work of part two of this chapter as I explore the quite different, but complimentary, methodology of political theology coming from the Latin American liberation tradition.

What is Religion?

In defense of the ongoing relevance and necessity of political theology in its analytic, Schmittian mode, I turn to the work of several contemporary scholars who have leveled an ideological critique of the concept of religion. Schmitt himself illuminates the fact that the secular realm of politics remains deeply theological in its theoretical structure. What these later theorists clarify is that the modern concept of "religion" obscures this truth, masking over the intrinsically theological operations of political systems.

According to comparative religion scholar Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the ancient cultures of the Greeks, Egyptians, Aztecs, Japanese, Indian, or Chinese had no equivalent concept or term for what we refer to in our modern day as "religion."[247] The modern term "religion" comes from the Latin *religio*, which, as best we can tell, derives from *ligo* meaning to tie or bind. Thus, *religio* would be to re-tie or re-bind, to "reestablish a bond that has been severed."[248] It was not a term that received much attention in the ancient Roman world, but could best be synonymized with terms such as piety or devotion.

Augustine himself addresses the ambiguity of the term in *City of God* Book X:

> The word religion might seem to express more definitely the worship due to God alone, and therefore Latin translators have used this word to represent θρησκεία; yet, as not only the uneducated, but also the best instructed, use the word religion to express human ties, and relationships, and affinities, it would inevitably introduce ambiguity to use this word in discussing the worship of God, unable as we are to say that religion is nothing else than the worship of God, without contradicting the common usage which applies this word to the observance of social relationships.[249]

There is no hint, in Augustine's description of the term, of a juxtaposition between a "religious" and "secular" sphere. Quite the opposite, Augustine indicates that the ordinary use of the term religion refers to the "relations between a man and his neighbor."

In the Middle Ages the term came to be contrasted with "secular" with respect to Catholic clergy that were associated with monastic communities, thus being considered "religious" by virtue of their particular devotions and vows. These "religious" clergy can be distinguished from the "secular" clergy, who live "in the world," so to speak, as opposed to in monastic communities.

For Thomas Aquinas, *religio* is treated as a subset of the virtue of justice, referring to the rites and practices associated with our natural duties to God. Thus, for Aquinas and for Augustine, there are not many religions, of which Christianity is one. Rather, with respect to God, Christianity is true *religio*, whereas what pagans, Jews, or Muslims perform is not really *religio* at all.

The advent of religion as a genus, under which many discreet religions (systems of faith and worship) exist as species, can be traced back as early as Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th century. But the most important developments occur with the major theological changes brought about during the Protestant Reformation. One such shift is the turn away from sacramental theology to a *religio* that is more interior, and less tied to specific rites

or practices. The primacy of faith came to be treated as the primacy of knowledge (though this is not what was intended by Calvin or Luther). True *religio* was thus not manifested in rites and sacraments but in doctrines. Attempts to thereby delineate "true *religio*" led to the creation of obviously parallel religions, which existed in the form of various and competing creeds and confessions. The first time that "religion" is treated as a genus with many species was with respect to the many competing Christian confessions that emerged after the Reformation. Only much later did this expand to include other non-Christian faiths as also "religions." This novel use of the term is clearest in the slogan associated with the 1555 Peace of Augsburg: *cuius regio*, *eius religio*, [whose region, his religion].[250] From this one can see that the origin of the modern use of the term religion has clear political implications.

Timothy Fitzgerald, in his book appropriately titled *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, argues that "religion" is a term developed and used for certain political or ideological ends. Fitzgerald's claim is that "there is no coherent non-theological theoretical basis for the study of religion."[251] The emphasis here is that the term religion can only have real meaning within a certain theological context. "Theology as theology" is a discipline that Fitzgerald fully defends as a "perfectly legitimate intellectual exercise."[252] The problem arises when the term religion is used univocally, thus masking over real difference.

The claim that there is a universal phenomenon of religion has theological implications. If every culture has this distinctive feature called religion then whatever end toward which all religions point must, in some way, be one. Therefore, regardless of the ends towards which a certain practice or ritual is intended, those who invoke the category

of religion impose one homogenous end on a series of disparate practices.[253] The very term religion implies a more or less solitary end towards which all "religious" activity is directed. And this is analogous to (and cooperative with) other forms of cultural, political, and economic imperialism. Economic freedom is defined as capitalism, political freedom is defined as liberal democracy, and religious freedom is defined as the practice of apolitical, private rituals.

In the case of Western colonialism, the invention of religion disarms the indigenous peoples to resist political and economic imperialism. For if there is some cultural justification for ordering the local economy in a way that is counter to global capitalism, such claims can be relegated to the realm of the religious. Likewise, if local government is ordered in a certain way that is contrary to Western hegemony, the colonizer can justify a re-ordering of society in the name of the 'rational' practice of separating church and state, or religion and politics.

The ideological weight carried by the category of "religious" is especially evident with respect to the question of violence. The same act of violence, perpetrated by a "religious" versus a "secular" actor entirely changes how it is generally received by the public. Violence in the name of "religion" is never justified under any circumstances according to the "modern configuration of values."[254] Conversely, because the non-religious or secular realm is categorized as the sphere of rational and objective thought, then violence on behalf of a secular cause can often be seen as necessary. The one who commits violence on behalf of a secular cause can be lauded as heroic and valiant, whereas the same act of violence in the name of a cause that has been deemed "religious," is *de facto* a radical, extremist, and terrorist.

What Fitzgerald aims to demonstrate is that there is no such thing as a value-neutral realm of the secular, rather "the secular is itself a sphere of transcendental values."[255] The category of religion, however, obscures this truth by being the catchall for transcendental claims. Those who employ the category of religion therefore assume that "a distinction between the religious and the non-religious realms must exist universally in all societies, awaiting recognition by those who have yet to outgrow the mystifications and irrationalities of their respective traditions."[256] The colonizer (or the Western nation-builder, or the trans-national corporation) is tolerant of beliefs, but only as beliefs. Important things like political and economic policy, they say, must be grounded in "knowledge," which is ultimately secular in nature.

Therefore, religion, as religion, was never de-politicized. Instead, the very construction of the category of religion was accomplished by the privatization of certain practices that had otherwise political, social, and economic import. This bundling of certain practices under the category of religion "clear[ed] a conceptual space for 'secular nature'—not only the world as an object imagined as a machine or an organism but also natural individuals, natural rationality, natural forms of exchange, natural markets."[257]

A few possible responses to this critique of religion present themselves as options. One is to simply abandon the term "religion" altogether in its modern use because it is freighted with too much ideological bias as to provide any conceptual clarity. It obscures more than it clarifies. This, however, seems an impractical solution. Language evolves naturally, and despite our consciousness of the problems associated with certain terms, it is simply not effective to artificially try to restructure language.

Instead, I would advocate for an expansion of the use of the term religion that would rob it of its ideological power. So long as religion is used to refer to private, essentially apolitical, sets of beliefs and practices regarding the supernatural, then so-called secular institutions and ideologies (I think especially of capitalism and nationalism) can maintain a façade of neutrality and rationality. This can be countered by acknowledging that nationalism and capitalism are not merely quasi-religions, but perform the very same societal function as many so-called world religions.[258] This is an appropriate counter to the growing line of argument that, for example, because many iterations of Islam do not conform to the privatized, de-politicized, notion of "religion," it therefore is not a religion at all.[259]

Rather than creating a more exclusive definition of religion, I would advocate a more inclusive one, such that capitalism and nationalist ideologies can be categorized alongside other more traditionally understood religions. This broader definition of religion is not meant to be a new analytic category but a strategic resistance against the ideological bias inherent in much of the term's use. As argued above, theology constitutes the rules that regulate the grammar of a community and its social imaginary. In the case of Catholic theology, this community is the Catholic Church. But what do we call the grammar that regulates the social imaginary of the United States? It is partly political (particularly those norms enshrined in the U.S. Constitution); but it is also partly cultural. The American social imaginary is guided by a story; perhaps we could even say it *is* a story. National stories are myths, in the non-pejorative sense. So too are economic ideologies such as capitalism or Marxism. As Stanley Hauerwas has repeatedly quipped:

Political liberalism is "the story that we should have no story except the story we chose when we had no story."[260]

This critical analysis of the category of religion relates directly to the task of political theology because it elucidates the intrinsic relationship between theology and politics. What Schmitt refers to as "secularized theological concepts," can now be more clearly seen as still remaining deeply theological in nature. Political theology sheds light on political and economic structures by unveiling the theological and "religious" undergirding. It is as if one were to engage in a comparative phenomenology between a classically "religious" system, as, say, Roman Catholicism (with all of its rites, texts, saints, shrines, relics, etc.) and compare it to a more traditionally "secular" or political system such as American nationalism (which also has rites, texts, saints, shrines, and relics). By broadening the field of so-called religion, acknowledging what Schmitt has shown regarding the theological core of modern political concepts, we can place these two systems on the same plane and examine them under the same aegis.

The sort of political theology that I advocate here is best exemplified in the works of William Cavanaugh who, in light of the ideological critique of religion, provides excellent political, social, and cultural analysis, precisely because he is able to read these phenomena together through the lens of the theological. "Politics is a practice of the imagination," he writes. "How does a provincial farm boy become persuaded that he must travel as a soldier to another part of the world and kill people he knows nothing about?"[261] He must be given a story—a myth—one in which he can truly participate. This myth of the nation-state that stirs up the patriotic spirit and summons us, on occasion, to tremendous acts of violence on its behalf, is analyzed by Cavanaugh as an

alternative to the Christian theological tradition. There are, within these "secular" myths, various forms of ecclesiology, soteriology, eschatology, and theology. The work of political theology in its first, analytic, task is to expose the implicit theologies in these cultural-political-economic myths.

And by putting "the political and the theological imaginations on equal footing," we can "open an opportunity for the theological imagination to enact alternative space-times."[262] In other words, this mode of political theology, in the Schmittian tradition, following Cavanaugh, Kahn, et al, opens the door for a more politically active and engaged theology. But this strictly analytical work, noting the relation between political and theological concepts, does not yet supply us with a means for developing theo-political praxis. After all, as has been repeatedly emphasized, we must avoid a naïve understanding of a causal effect of theology upon politics—as if, by changing our theological perspective, this will have any determinate political effect. For political theology to take its turn towards praxis, there is a different sort of analysis that is necessary, one that the Latin American tradition of liberation theology has developed quite robustly.

From Theory to Praxis

Clodovis Boff's seminal work of 1987, *Theology and Praxis*, remains the most exhaustive treatment of political theological method.[263] And while I will have opportunity to offer clarification and critique throughout, I intend to put forward Boff's method as a sufficient rejoinder to the methodological confusion expressed in the first two chapters of this dissertation. The Schmittian and post-Schmittian methods have found themselves

inadequate to the task of answering this works central question, namely, *What is the import of the doctrine of the Trinity on Christian political praxis?* To give adequate answer to this question we must be careful to avoid the two great pitfalls for political theology: one, being insufficiently theological, the other being insufficiently political.

Boff's method is structured very plainly in three parts: socio-analytic mediation, hermeneutic mediation, practical mediation. Seeing, judging, acting.[264] The seeing—socio-analytic mediation—refers to that by which the political theologian uses the best of the social analytic tools at his or her disposal in order to properly understand the socio-political situation of the time. This is the preparation of the material object of political theology, or as it is rendered more literally from Boff's native Portuguese: theology of the political [*teologia do politico*]. The judging—hermeneutic mediation—is the *formal object* of political theology.[265] It is an elucidation of the light by which the political theologian views the political. These both are the necessary preparations for acting. Thus we can see that Boff's method is perfectly suited to the question at hand because it is ultimately oriented toward Christian political praxis, informed by a rigorous understanding of the contemporary political situation as well as the enduring truths of the Christian faith.

Boff's description of the political theological method is as elegant as it is complex. His account is built on a series of three-step syntheses. Some material object will be worked upon by a formal object to produce some new object of knowledge, *which itself* becomes the formal object of a new investigation. By material object Boff refers to that which is studied, and by formal object to the perspective from which it is studied. The material object he calls a first generality, the formal object a second generality, and

the resulting knowledge a third generality. This third generality subsequently serves as a second generality at a new level, as can be seen in the diagrams below.[266]

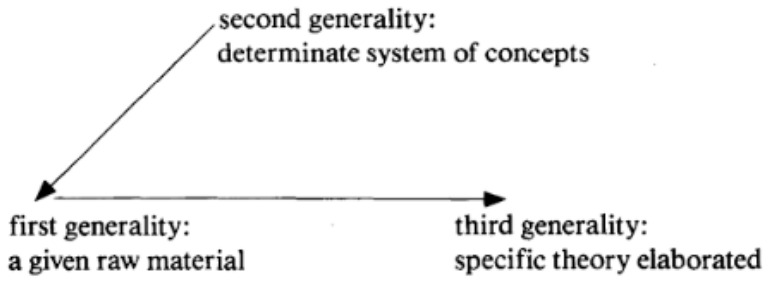

Diagram 1

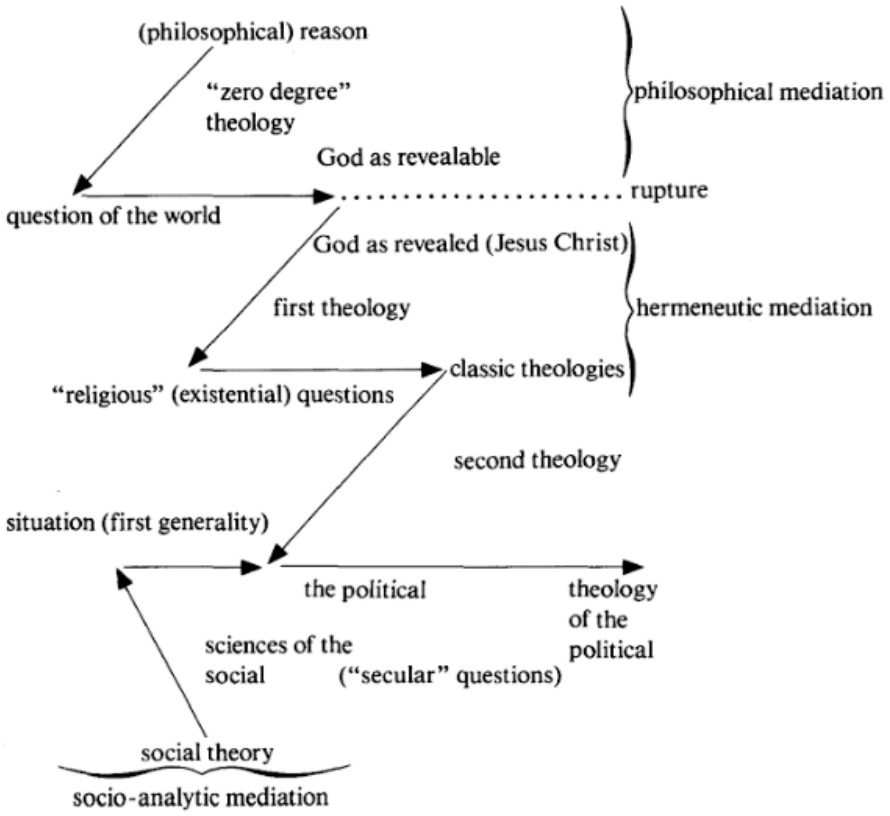

Diagram 2

Socio-analytic Mediation

The Christian faith compels its adherents to act. The desire to act, compelled as it is by faith, leads naturally to a need for an understanding of the world in which one is acting. The possibility always exists of some well-meaning person or group who, while intending to alleviate suffering, in fact make it worse due to their lack of understanding of the complexity of the situation. Thus faith, and the action that it demands, implicitly requires an understanding of society that is to be derived from serious social analysis. "There is no such thing, then, as a theology that would have its origin and finality in praxis and *not* have socio-analytic mediation."[267]

The absence of socio-analytic mediation, what Boff refers to as empiricism, is the first of five possible errors that the political theologian may make with respect to social analysis. The first and most natural mistake would be to ignore it entirely by supposing, wrongly, that understanding society requires no special tools of analysis. But, as Boff claims, if it is true that there is "no such thing as an absolutely immediate reading of the real" then what the empiricist has engaged in is not so much a political theology without social analysis, but without *critical* social analysis. We are all, always, employing some perspective, making use of some tools. The least of our responsibilities is to be self-aware and self-critical of the analytical tools at work.[268]

The second danger, beyond the mere absence of socio-analytic mediation, is the deliberate *exclusion* of such, in what Boff calls methodological purism. Relatedly, and thirdly, is the substitution of theology in place of social analysis, or theologism. In a fitting critique of what I have described above as the work of the post-Schmittians, Boff writes: "Its method consists in a *free association of ideas*, replacing an *organization of*

ideas from a point of departure in tested, verified principles."[269] Fourthly, Boff names "semantic mix," which refers to those who fail to sufficiently distinguish between the two moments of political theology and therefore theological categories are *prematurely* injected into the domain of social analysis. Lastly, "bilingualism" is the name Boff gives to the error of attempting socio-analytic and hermeneutic mediations simultaneously. Again, the risk remains the same as before, that the two fields of inquiry are not properly distinguished.[270]

Boff's insistence on such a strict delineation between the socio-analytic and the theological moments arises from his conviction that the two operate at different "distances from the real." The sciences, social sciences included, are, according to Boff, at a closer distance to the real than is theology. By this Boff does not mean that the sciences are truer because of their "proximity to the real." This can be seen by the fact that he locates "common sense" at an even closer relation to the real than the sciences. Common sense is not truer than the sciences. Far from it, at this level resides "the content of the current, perhaps dominant, ideology." Instead, he says quite plainly, that these degrees of distance, "although seeming to distance us from the real, actually lead us to it."[271]

However we may want to categorize this difference between theology and the social sciences, whether it be as distances from the real or degrees of abstraction, Boff's point is that the two are not siblings. They cannot be placed alongside one another, treated in parallel, or used in an alternating fashion.

> But in the case of a theology having the political for an object, the adoption of a *lateral* position relative to the other disciplines will have a tendency to distort the autonomous, profane nature of the object that it has

> so assumed. . . . Therefore "natural" (scientific) knowledge must be considered to constitute the basis of theological cognition—as indeed theological tradition itself has always admitted.[272]

Though the claim is certainly not uncontroversial, it is clear, and, to most it is likely palatable. The implied analogy to the relation between theology and the natural sciences is quite fitting. For example, those who would insist that the creation accounts of Genesis be read *scientifically* end up doing an injustice to both the science of origins and the doctrine of Creation. That is not to say, of course, that theology is without tools to critique scientific claims. It can and must do so, especially when the sciences leave their natural domains and begin to exaggerate their abilities, making ideological assertions under the guise of scientific objectivity. But here we see that theology is critiquing science, not as science, but only insofar as *scientists*, fallible and prone to ideology as we all are, overstep the proper bounds of science. True and good science has no quarrel with faith, just as reason is in no competition with revelation—so long as both are understood within their proper domains. And so it is with the relation between theology and the social sciences.

And thus we arrive at Boff's central claim vis-à-vis socio-analytic mediation, namely that this involves an area of expertise that evades the theologian as theologian. Because the social sciences seem more akin to the work of the theologian there is a greater temptation for the two to overstep their bounds. Nevertheless, and perhaps especially because of the ease with which the lines can be blurred, they must all the more be held firmly apart.

Such a clear distinction intends to preserve the integrity of both. And despite the protestations of his critics, Boff is clear that we must avoid the ideologization of faith.

"When the theoretical self-projection of faith concentrates on immanence in the political, faith may be tempted to horizontalism, to the neglect of the transcendent. This temptation can also be called 'secularism': it consists in the *mundanization of the divine*."[273] Yet Boff is also quick to clarify that the greater danger today is not this reductionism, this immanentizing of theology, but its opposite: an overemphasis on theology's transcendence such that we are led to "apoliticism" or "escapism."[274] Regardless of which poses a more serious threat today, both should be, and are, noted as possible extremes on the part of theology in the process of socio-analytic mediation.

With all that being said, we come finally to hear what exactly it is that Boff proposes the theologian to do to make use of social analysis. More to the point, how can the political theologian choose *which* social theorist to listen to or which theory to abide by, especially given the premise that such issues are beyond his or her competency as a theologian?

First, one may appeal to scientific criteria, namely, that we ought to choose that social theory which has greater explanatory scope. Second, and more decisively, there is the ethical criterion. The theologian ought to choose the social theory that more closely aligns with the "practical plan for personal or political action" which the theologian has already espoused.[275] But of course this criterion can only be satisfied by appeal to a pre-existing commitment, in the case of the Christian political theologian, that commitment is the Christian faith. Here we see that while the social analytic moment of political theology must be granted relative autonomy, it is never operating in a theologically neutral fashion. It operates in the political theological system, only at the behest of the

theological motivations. In political theology, theology truly remains queen of the sciences.

However, in many so-called "political theologies," theology is not decisive. Often the predetermined ideology (Marxism, Americanism, black liberation, feminism, political liberalism, etc.) chooses among theological systems (or invents systems) that would be the most compatible resource for developing such a political theology. Such a reversal of priority would be a flagrant violation of Boff's method, because it confuses the material and formal object of study.

For Boff, the political is the material object, and theology is the formal. Theology is the vantage from which the political is being read. To invert them, such that theology is being read from a political-ideological perspective, is an entirely different enterprise—perhaps a legitimate one, but an entirely different one. And yet it seems that a great deal, if not a majority, of what goes by the name of "political theology" or "liberation theology" today is operating under this inverted schema. When theological language, or even theological content, such as doctrine or dogma, is taken up or abandoned in order to conform to a pre-given political project then one can know that in that case theology is the material object, not the formal object.

Regina Schwartz, Bonnie Honig, Slavoj Žižek, and many others all fit this description of picking, choosing, and changing theological concepts in order to serve a political agenda. I point this out not primarily as a critique, but merely as a point of distinction. Just as the integrity of the social sciences must be respected, so theology, as a science, must be respected. Without this, political theology is a cynical ideological tool that exploits the genuine faith of some for the ideological purposes of others. With Boff I

espouse the view that theology is the *formal* object of study, and politics the material. Politics is what is being read, and theology is what is doing the reading.

In summary, the process of socio-analytic mediation must grant a relative autonomy to the critical tools of social analysis, without rushing to theological judgment, or conflating theological with sociological expertise. That being said, the theological remains the dominant term in the relation between theology and the political. This is expressed by Boff in his distinction of the formal and material objects of study. In practical terms, this means that even the selection of socio-analytic tools is subject the values already determined by the theological system.

Hermeneutic Mediation

To refer back to Diagram 2, we remember that *political theology* is the product of the encounter between classical theologies and "the political." This "political" is itself determined by the process of socio-analytic mediation wherein the social sciences (formal object) work on the contemporary situation (material object). Similarly, the "theological" that encounters the political is a product of its own process of mediation, *hermeneutic mediation*, wherein the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ (formal object) works on our religious or existential questions (material object) in order to yield "classical theology." To consider the material object of theology to be existential questions is a very modern way of articulating the enterprise. But recall that the central questions that concern even the *Summa Theologiae* are the nature of God and the end of man—religious, existential questions indeed. This work of theology is also held in tension by a separate work of mediation in which our philosophical reason (formal

object) works upon the question of the world (material object) in order to yield a philosophical theology, or what Boff calls "God as revealable." This revealable God opens the way for God as revealed, and the whole classical theological enterprise is underway.

As Boff further refines the understanding of "the theological," it is crucial to distinguish theology from, "simple religious discourse," and also from "philosophy of religion," or "'human sciences' of religion."[276] What distinguishes theology from simple religious discourse is, of course, its "critical and systematic nature."[277] Theology is distinguished from the latter by the presence or absence of faith. This is another major point of distinction from what often passes as "political theology," which is simply not theology at all because it has no relation to faith. Or, at best, we could say that it is some other kind of theology, but it is not the Christian theology that it often claims to be.

This is not at all meant as a way of preventing anyone from engaging in the discourse, or of delegitimizing any particular opinions. But theology is a communal discourse of faith. Christian theology, by its very nature, deals with God *as revealed* in Jesus Christ. The datum of revelation, therefore, while subject to interpretation, is not open to questioning—not from the perspective of theology per se. In theology, the datum of revelation is the formal object; it is that which norms and determines what is produced. In philosophy of religion, or religious studies, this (supposed) datum is the material object, being worked upon some other theoretical system, be it philosophical or sociological. That is the essential difference at stake. It is crucial, therefore, that political theology be *theological* and not be conflated with "religious studies with a political interest."

And here we come to an important point, which Boff states with wonderful clarity: "Only a 'theological theology' can become a genuine 'political theology.'"[278] And why? Because, "'lay' analyses of religion, faith, church, and so on, today constitute an indispensable mediation for a theology that hopes to avoid shouting to the four winds."[279] If the work of academic theology, especially *political* theology, is going to have any impact in the real world (as any political theology would implicitly intend) then it *must* speak to the lived religious experience of the common people. In other words, true political theology must speak from and to the perspective of faith. Political theology is done in the light of faith; that which is done in the light of reason alone might be "political religious studies" but it is not political theology.

That being said, methodologically, we must also avoid the danger of attempting to apply the datum of revelation immediately to questions of the political. Theology must first be *produced*, and it is theology in its classical formulation that is then suited to interact with other questions. In light of the concerns listed here, for the purpose of producing a genuinely political theology, the process of hermeneutic mediation must be entrusted to the norms of classical, orthodox theology. A political theology that is heretical in nature would likewise result in a "shouting to the four winds," because it is a theology that has severed itself from the life of the community.

As I write, I have in mind the Roman Catholic communities in which I live and work, though I should like to think that this project has adequate applicability outside of the Catholic tradition. However, I cannot here clarify or defend every theological assertion that, outside of a Catholic context, would be disagreeable. Catholic theology is beholden to the source of theology, namely divine revelation in the Person of Jesus

Christ, faithfully transmitted to us in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. This material data is what Boff will refer to as "the real" as opposed to the "knowledge of the real." Faith is that spontaneous awareness of the real, self-revelation of God. Theology, on the other hand is a work of natural human reason that inquires of revelation.

Theology thus finds itself uniquely positioned with respect to these two great supernatural realities: faith and revelation.[280] The self-revelation of God is the order of the real toward which both faith and theology are ordered. Faith and theology are two modes of appropriating the divine self-revelation to the human mind. The difference between faith and theology is that revelation, the Word of God, demands faith of each hearer, but it does not demand theology. All theologians are called to believe; but not all believers are called to be theologians. Faith is essential whereas theology is non-essential.

What then is the purpose of theology? It must be to assist faith. Faith is a supernatural gift of God. It cannot be mustered up by human will but it can be strengthened and developed. As a virtue, faith can be nurtured, fostered, and therefore grow. And while no essential truth of the faith needs natural reason to be known, nevertheless, reason can assist in all of these ways by nurturing faith. Theology can work evangelistically as a means to show the believability of faith; it can also work authoritatively to clarify what is or is not in keeping with the deposit of faith.

The claims of faith and reason, properly understood, cannot be in contradiction to one another because God is the author of both. So that which is beyond the limits of reason to know must be determined by faith in revelation alone. And those points on which faith is uncertain it is left to reason to clarify, if need be. But a theology that undermines faith as such, or worse, rejects the very datum of revelation, does nothing but

undermine itself. Theology without revelation is like a ship without an ocean: it is just playing at nothing. Theology without faith is like a ship without a sail: without drive or motivation, lifeless and inconsequential. It is the lived life of the faithful community that gives purpose and inspiration to the theologian.

Just as in socio-analytic mediation one is forced with the decision of which theoretical perspectives to choose, what sort of reason ought to be applied to the data of divine revelation. And as in the former case, we must acknowledge that no system is without bias and we are in no position to judge one philosophical or socio-analytic system as objectively superior to all the rest. What we can and must do, however, is choose that which is most fitting to the task. As in the case of socio-analytic mediation we must choose a system that is most in harmony with the values espoused by Christian faith since the task at hand, after all, is the pursuit of a Christian political theology.

Similarly then, in the theological exploration of Christian faith, one must reason in such a way that is in keeping with the core tenets of that faith. To reason about the data of Christian revelation, for example, from an atheistic worldview can and has been done, but to what end? It is a novel exercise that may or may not bear some interesting fruit, but atheism, or philosophical materialism, or a host of other philosophies are simply inadequate to the task of reasoning about God's self-revelation in the Person of Jesus Christ because they deny, in one way or another, what is central to the faith. And here is where we see the value of the *sensus fidelium*.[281] A theology that is wholly given over to novelty is a theology severed from community. And a theology without a community of faith is hardly worthy of the name. Especially for political theology, which is oriented toward praxis, the process of hermeneutic mediation must remain in step with the faith of

the lay people. Otherwise the theologian, as Boff says, will merely be shouting at the wind.

After all, one might object that philosophical materialism may indeed be a better way of reading the story of Christianity and gleaning its core message. And perhaps one could say it is sheer dogmatism that blinds us to accepting this radical possibility. But the ends to which this problem can be multiplied are endless. That is why, as a methodological principle, the work of the theologian must take the faith of the community as wind to its sails.[282] Otherwise we will find ourselves like those "struggling innovators" who "philosophize without any respect for faith, the power of inventing in accordance with his own pleasure and bent being asked and given in turn by each one." So Pope Leo XIII warns against such when he writes:

> Hence, it was natural that systems of philosophy multiplied beyond measure, and conclusions differing and clashing one with another arose about those matters even which are the most important in human knowledge. From a mass of conclusions men often come to wavering and doubt; and who knows not how easily the mind slips from doubt to error? But, as men are apt to follow the lead given them, this new pursuit seems to have caught the souls of certain Catholic philosophers, who, throwing aside the patrimony of ancient wisdom, chose rather to build up a new edifice than to strengthen and complete the old by aid of the new-ill-advisedly, in sooth, and not without detriment to the sciences.[283]

Leo XIII's encyclical argues that due deference be given to the Angelic Doctor of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas.[284] Aquinas is by no means an infallible authority on faith or reason, but the Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic synthesis which he brings to bear on Scripture and the Church Fathers is a precious treasure that the theologian neglects at his or her own peril. Especially if the intention is to write from and for the Catholic

community, the basic Thomistic framework is an anchor of Catholic faith and orthodoxy that simply cannot be disregarded.[285]

However, we also cannot overlook the important turn to historical consciousness, which began in Catholic theology not at the Second Vatican Council, but earlier with St. John Henry Newman and his 1845 *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.[286] Newman there clarified how it is that divine revelation, given once and for all to the Apostles, can yield new and valuable insights. Later theologians often have access to insights to which even the Apostles themselves would not have been privy. A classical example of such development would be the understanding of the divinity of Christ, which is surely proclaimed by the sacred authors of the New Testament, but nevertheless comes to a fuller and more precise definition in the following centuries. That Augustine could have given a more robust account of the divinity of Christ, or of the Trinity, than Saints Peter or Paul is due to the legitimate development of doctrine over time.

The preservation of the Sacred Tradition need not take the form of merely repeating and protecting unchanged theological formulae. Neither does it mean slipshod additions and subtractions to the deposit of faith. Rather, Newman calls us to recognize that through ongoing prayer, reflection, and discussion, doctrines may legitimately *develop*. This is distinguished from corruption by seven criteria:

> There is no corruption if it retains one and the same type, the same principles, the same organization; if its beginnings anticipate its subsequent phases, and its later phenomena protect and subserve its earlier; if it has a power of assimilation and revival, and a vigorous action from first to last.[287]

Interestingly enough, Newman's own idea of the development of doctrine was itself a seed that bore fruit about a century later as there was a movement in the Church of *ressourcement*—what Reginald Garrigou LaGrange called a *nouvelle théologie*. This revival of theology was a move away from the rigid, ahistorical, neo-scholasticism that had been restraining theological thought. What was produced in the mid-twentieth century and following certainly included many "corruptions," in Newman's sense, but also a great deal of legitimate development. So, following Newman, a traditional (but nevertheless historically-minded) theology will be the grounding of the hermeneutic mediations in political theology.

In short, the process of hermeneutic mediation seeks the establishment of the theological foundation that will serve as the formal object of political theology. Once again, the theologian must take special care to not allow the ideological influences or political proclivities to pre-determine the content of theology. Instead, theology must remain faithful to the Word of God, especially as it has been received by the community of faith throughout the ages. The theologian must balance fidelity to the tradition with an attitude of historical consciousness. One must do more than simply parrot what has come before, but also cannot stray outside the established boundaries of orthodoxy. Only such a theology that is at once contemporary and traditional can speak to and mobilize the Church.

A Theological Corrective

In keeping with the theological perspective just articulated, before concluding this chapter on political theological method it is necessary to offer a theological corrective to

the proposal made by Clodovis Boff. While I embrace his understanding of the need for socio-analytic and hermeneutic mediations, and his general schema of how these are related, there is a subtler issue that needs to be addressed. It concerns his construal of the relation between nature and grace, which, as Boff notes, is a seriously important topic for political theology because it determines how one understands the very nature of what theology can bring to politics.

In *Theology and Praxis* he treats the question of the meaning of four terms: faith, revelation, *agape*, and salvation. These are crucial to his development of political theology because faith/revelation is what the Christian community distinctively brings, but *agape*/salvation is already out there in the world by God's grace. However, his framing of this issue is somewhat problematic and I would like to offer a clarifying response.

First, Boff begins by critiquing the juxtaposition of the natural and supernatural. Everything, for Boff, is in the order of the supernatural, because everything is touched and enlivened by God's grace. The idea of mere "nature," therefore, is only a logical concept, but does not exist in reality. He calls pure nature, "an unrealized possibility, forever vacated—a history dead from all eternity."[288] What he calls the "Order of Salvation," is, for him, what is *real*. Faith is *awareness* of the real.[289] Faith is only an awareness of God's salvific offer; Boff is emphatic on this point. The offer is concretely accepted as grace or rejected as sin, but either way, the order of salvation touches every human being, entirely independent of one's awareness or knowledge of this offer.

The positive response to the universal offer of salvation can come in two forms: religious and ethical. A religious acceptance of the offer of salvation is embodied by

fidelity to "the absolute demand … in the guise of a personal Absolute," whereas in the case of a strictly ethical acceptance, "this same imperative … declares itself in the guise of abstract values."[290] There is no contradiction, he says, between these two forms. They are entirely compatible, but they are not equal. The *ethical* form is the "dominant term," because salvation is "decided on the practice of love."[291] In short, the ethical without the religious is sufficient, but the religious without the ethical is worthless. Works of love, or *agape*, are not indicative of an antecedent acceptance of grace, rather these works constitute grace itself.

It is only the ethical response to the offer of salvation, works of *agape*, that ultimately matters. This is how Boff assures that all people have access to God's saving work, because the ability to love is available to all. This is entirely independent of the history of God's self-revelation and any corresponding faith. The point that Boff repeats again and again throughout chapters six and seven of his *Theology and Praxis* is that salvation and faith must be clearly separated, and any dependence of salvation upon faith must be rejected.[292]

Boff presents salvation as strictly ontological as opposed to historical.[293] His concern is that "salvation" be considered open to all of history, and on this point I take no issue. It should be considered obviously true that salvation is offered, in some way, to all people. In order to explain this possibility he insists that grace is operative in the very ontological structure of the human person, and therefore salvation, manifested as *agape*, is part of the ontological reality of all people. Faith is thus nothing but an awareness or consciousness of this salvation. One may have salvation without knowing it as such. "Salvation is the real apprehension of (the reality of) God in and through the practice of

agape. Faith is the conscious apprehension of (the experience of) God in and through religion."[294]

This means that the only question of political theology is whether or not the political world is oriented toward salvation—*agape*—and not at all what a society professes. "[W]hat counts in politics are the actual *practices*, and not what their agents say of these practices in terms of ideology or even faith. . . . The theologian need bend no ear, not even the most benevolent, credulous ear, either to professions of faith or proclamations of atheism."[295] After all, those who claim to be Christian may fail to practice *agape*, and those who deny being Christian, may in fact practice it.[296]

To summarize Boff on this point: (1) Faith is dependent upon revelation; (2) revelation is manifest in history; (3) salvation is independent of faith; (4) therefore salvation is independent of history.[297] This is why he makes it known that he would prefer to recast the concept of "salvation history," as "revelation history," since what is actually given in history is not salvation itself but rather revelation, which offers *awareness* of salvation.[298] Salvation, unlike revelation, is built into the very ontological structure of reality, such that there is no such thing as "pure" nature. But rather, from the eyes of "faith," everything is always-already a recipient of grace.[299]

Is faith dependent upon revelation? Following Rahner, Boff insists that grace is always-already at work in the human spirit. Paradoxically, humans are, by their nature, more than they are by nature. This is the "order of salvation," which is ontological. Faith, on the epistemological plane, is only for those who are recipients of revelation, who are made aware of this salvation. "Salvation touches every person, whereas revelation is

specific to those alone to whom it has been *given* to become aware of this same salvation—to Christians."[300]

But this distinction is quite curious. For if grace is intrinsic to human ontology, then why should we think that awareness of this component of the human spirit is inaccessible to the human mind without historical revelation? In fact, the whole tradition of natural theology and natural law would indicate that things like the nature of God and the moral law are accessible to everyone by the light of reason. That is why I believe that Boff's claim that salvation is independent of faith must be clarified and moderated.

Salvation can only be construed as independent of faith, if faith is narrowly defined as specific, thematic knowledge of historical (Christian) revelation. But because Boff makes such a dramatic distinction between grace/salvation/ontology and faith/revelation/history he is simultaneously radically liberal regarding the accessibility of salvation and radically conservative when it comes to the accessibility of revelation.

Boff's insistence that salvation is entirely independent of faith does not seem to reflect the great scriptural witness to the primacy of faith. For, "without faith it is impossible to please him."[301] On the other hand, because he so narrowly defines faith (suggesting it is reserved for recipients of historical revelation) he would appear to severely restrict the ability of natural reason to come to know God and his law, an ability to which the Bible itself clearly testifies.[302] Boff toys with the Rahnerian idea of "anonymous Christianity," but I think he would do better to embrace it more thoroughly.

Two options present themselves. One could say that faith is entirely dependent upon historical revelation, and therefore salvation (in order to be universal) must be independent of faith. This is Boff's claim. I think a preferable articulation would be to

assert that salvation *is* dependent upon faith, but that faith is not strictly dependent upon historical revelation. In the end the universal offer of salvation remains intact, but the primacy of faith is preserved as well. Otherwise, one may fall into a kind of Pelagianism, wherein salvation is simply determined by one's own good works.

Boff puts forward the parable of the sheep and the goats as evidence in favor of his separation of faith from salvation. There we see the "sheep" who enter into the glory of the kingdom of God: they are rewarded for their corporal works of mercy, despite the fact that they appear to have no awareness that what they did was in fact done for the Son of Man. *"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?"* etc. But, from a purely exegetical perspective, it seems clear that the parable does not particularly have unbelievers in mind. These charitable workers are unaware that it is the Lord himself whom they are serving, but that is not the same as saying that they were unaware that the Lord had commanded such service. By reducing the notion of salvation to the practice of *agape*, as he does, Boff distorts the primacy of grace, or rather, conflates grace and works. As he says, "it is fair to say that human beings *make* their salvation."[303] The truth is that our good works of charity can and must cooperate with divine grace in the working out of our salvation, but we are not saved *by* our charity.

My concern is that the understanding of faith and salvation that Boff provides does not cohere with the political theological task as he himself describes it.[304] For if faith is *only* an awareness of salvation, which is always-already and everywhere at work in the world, then how can Christians make a non-trivial contribution to the political world?[305] Or, how can we avoid the idea that Christian political theology only serves as a motivational tool to get Christians to be about the political work, a work that secularists

and those of other religions are already doing? These are both notions that Boff specifically aims to avoid, and thus his method requires a corrective on the matter of the representation of faith and grace. My accusation is *not* that Boff trivializes the possibility of Christian contribution to politics or that he reduces its role to that of motivator. My concern is that his construal of salvation, faith, revelation, and *agape* leave his proposal vulnerable to these errors.

To further clarify, and perhaps to improve upon, Boff's proposal, I would like to refer to the Catholic tradition of understanding charity as a theological virtue. The theological virtue of charity (*caritas*) is not merely good works, or even love of neighbor, but a divinely infused *love of God* (in the double sense of the genitive). This *caritas* cannot be independent of faith because, as Augustine states: "None can love what he does not know."[306] Given Boff's schema of the relation between grace, faith, and love—to say "none can love what he does not know," would imply that only self-identifying Christians have any hope of salvation. But this is *not* the case if we are able to accept that a certain knowledge of God and the moral law (i.e., the mandate of divine love) *is* accessible to all, even outside of historical revelation.

Therefore, a revised understanding of the relationship between salvation, faith, and history is in order. In *Theology and Social Theory*, John Milbank offers just such a revision. He describes Boff's work (influenced as it is by Karl Rahner) as "naturalizing of the supernatural." Rahner holds that in every sensation of something limited (a finite being) there is an implicit awareness of limitlessness (being as such). A sensible object is grasped as a discreet object only against the horizon of what is beyond this sensible object.[307] And this is an effect of grace, that the very horizon of our knowledge is this

Mystery—the "whither" of our anticipatory grasp (*Vorgriff*).[308] The "whither" of this act of transcendence, this reaching for more, is God *as mystery*.[309] "The Whither of transcendental experience is always there as the nameless, the indefinable, the unattainable. For a name distinguishes and demarcates, pins down something by giving it a name chosen among many other names. But the infinite horizon, the Whither of transcendence cannot be so defined."[310] And this is an offer of *grace* because this capacity for self-transcendence is not constitutive of the essence of creatures but is bestowed universally to spiritual creatures as salvation or divinization.[311]

The *Vorgriff* by which one has an anticipatory grasp of God's eternal essence is the work of grace, not nature. But this grace is, and always has been, imparted to every human creature. So much so that without this grace a human would not really be human. Paradoxically, to be supernatural is intrinsic to human nature. So, rather than seeing grace as something that adds to nature (as if there were ever merely nature), grace is, as it were the hidden surplus always at work in nature.

What political theology can emerge from this Rahnerian conceptualization of the relation between grace and nature adopted by Clodovis Boff? Just as we look within the human person and can identify the implicit and anonymous work of grace, so also should we be able to find the work of grace in human societies. The Church and her sacraments, much less Christian theology itself, has no need to add anything to society, but rather to identify and build upon the grace that is already implicitly and anonymously at work. Jon Milbank critically summarizes this view as follows:

> [Theology thereby] provides motivation and creative energy for social and political action which retains its own immanent norms. Or else the social process itself is identified as the site of transcendence, of a process of

> "liberation" … and although there are no human needs which cannot be immanently met, liberation can still be identified by theology as the anonymous site of divine saving action.[312]

The alternative to this model is "supernaturalizing the natural." One may think here of the classical dictum that grace builds upon nature. Consider the relation between the cardinal and theological virtues. The cardinal virtues are intrinsic to human nature, and while, of course, all things come by means of grace, the cardinal virtues are present in the human soul by what we might call a prevenient grace, or the grace of creation. The theological virtues, on the other hand, are acquired only by means of a special grace, an infusion from without. Such graces can hardly be called natural, but supernatural, because they go beyond and add to what is intrinsic to human nature. In the political order, we may draw an analogy. Without the special aid of revelation human society is still able to organize itself in a more or less rational, more or less just, manner. What grace has to offer, therefore, is the elevation of society beyond its natural capacities toward a justice that is truly supernatural, suffused as it is by divine charity.[313]

The crucial question that divides the two approaches of Milbank and Boff is whether or not theology has the competency to make specific and concrete contributions to political discourse, beyond serving as a mere interpreter of an already fixed, and scientifically determined political system. For Milbank, theology, as queen of the sciences, "can judge not only the principles, but also the conclusions of other sciences."[314] And this conclusion is borne out of Milbank's fundamental claim, which is that: "Theology is just another socio-historical gaze, just another perspective alongside other gazes, and faith, in its commitment to this gaze, constitutes a metanarrative: this is what I maintain, but political theology, and Boff in particular denies."[315]

This odd phrase from Milbank that theology is "just another socio-historical gaze," seems in contradiction to the traditional claim he espouses that theology is queen of the sciences. But what he means to indicate by referring to "just another socio-historical gaze," is to assert that theology is a particular view of the world on par with other worldviews, not in terms of quality or veracity, but in its status as a worldview. Some would like to suggest that theology is so qualitatively distinct from other sociological views of the world that theology can be synthesized with various sociologies without any compromise. This, for Milbank, is impossible. Another view of the world, if it is to be incorporated into or synthesized with Christian theology, must thereby be altered by its relationship.

Milbank confronts his readers here with the logic of the Incarnation, the scandal of particularity, which has always been the source of tension between classical and post-Enlightenment thinking. Can one really say that the *Logos* that made the world has become incarnate as *this* man, in *this* place, in *this* time? Because it is Milbank's intent to accept a more traditional interpretation of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* [outside the Church there is no salvation], he is able to claim that the Church's message is universal precisely in its particularity. Theology does not need to be "purified" of its accidental and historical qualities in order to be truly universal. And this is where Boff fails by insisting on a complete separation of salvation and revelation.

Boff dismisses "the theological conception that establishes a bond of dependency between salvation and revelation (or faith)."[316] He describes such a position as problematically "idealistic" or "logocentric" and believes it has the consequence that, "Christianity will be simply and impertinently set in opposition to other currents and

ideologies, such as Marxism."[317] But is this, in fact the case? Not entirely. For even Milbank will readily acknowledge "how Marxism can be of assistance to theology in exposing the disguised operation of semiotic conventions in the modern economy and the modern State; theology would, indeed, be foolish to forgo such aid."[318]

In short, then, Boff's theological approach to the relation between salvation and revelation can and must be revised in order to maintain the integrity of his own political theological method. Despite his fears of sectarianism, clericalism, and apoliticism, without a more robust account of the unique and specifically Christian contributions to political discourse on the part of theology, we are more than likely to end up in the opposite ditch of theology being "left with the most vacuous of tasks: announcing the empty, algebraic equation liberation = salvation."[319]

Boff, at times, does appear guilty of this reductionism when he explains his method in the following terms:

> The theologian does not work *with* the concept of "liberation." The theologian works *upon* the concept of liberation. . . . The process of theological articulation consists in this: to transform, with the help of the properly theological concept of "salvation" (second generality), the sociological concept of "liberation" (first generality) in such a way as to produce a theological proposition such as: "liberation is salvation" (third generality).[320]

But it must be further clarified that the concept of salvation is, in this case, the formal object, vis-à-vis the material object of "liberation." Therefore salvation is the dominant term for the theologian and the two *cannot* be merely equated. The terms are not identical, but, by means of the uniquely theological concept of salvation, the concept of liberation can be corrected, clarified, and improved. Thus the Christian political

community who works for the *salvation* of the people desires something greater than the merely secular desire for their *liberation*, although all of the goods of liberation may be included in and caught up into the good of salvation.

This alternative model that I am proposing is grounded in the classical Thomistic distinction between nature and grace, between the cardinal and theological virtues. The social sciences can and do operate with a relative autonomy, in a parallel manner to the natural capacity of human reason to decide upon issues of ethics. So there is, in this "natural" realm, a *kind* of grace, a *kind* of revelation, even a *kind* of salvation. In the social sciences, therefore, we should not expect to find a godless, barren wasteland, devoid of all grace and salvific divine activity; on the other hand, we cannot categorize it as a Garden of Eden where the only thing lacking is an awareness that it is also where God dwells.

Social sciences constitute real, substantial human knowledge; nevertheless, they remain incomplete and anticipatory without the work of hermeneutic mediation. The grace of God provided by the concrete, historical revelation of Jesus Christ, and diffused into the world through his Body, the Church, is irreplaceable and inimitable. What this grace offers in the human person is a divinization wherein the intrinsic goodness of a person is elevated, his or her moral wounds healed, and new and superabundant virtues are added. In the social order, that is, in the political realm, this grace can perform a parallel work of elevating, healing, and infusing with superabundant life. And, contra Boff, this addition is more than a mere *awareness* of the goodness already contained in the realm of nature.[321]

What Boff appears to be lacking is an adequate appreciation for the healing and elevating work of grace upon nature. But with this revision in place, Boff's methodology is rescued rather than demolished. For without a greater acknowledgement of the primacy of revelation, then political theology cannot help but become exactly what Boff hoped to avoid, namely, a "baptism" of pre-existing political systems that are neither theologically nor practically dependent in any way upon theology. Political theology cannot be reduced to a mere motivational force for an otherwise secular political program. And this is obtainable by employing the analogy of cardinal and theological virtues. Grace builds upon nature, with unique and substantive contributions. This model rejects both extremes: (1) that grace destroys nature and (2) that nature is always graced, in such a way that no meaningful distinction can be made between the two.[322]

According to Boff:

> Paradoxically, therefore, theology demonstrates its vitality when it is able to think an 'atheistic' politics (as well), and think it not only under the sign of sin (*sub ratione paccati* – ethics), but also under the sign of grace (*sub ratione gratiae*—hermeneutics). Theology must be able to uncover the properly "christic" signification even where it is ideologically denied, as in certain historical movements and in the practice of certain non-Christians.[323]

Here Boff expresses a true and valuable, though partial function of Christian political theology. We may "read" the material object of social analysis from a theological point of view and find within it signs of sin and grace. Just as we may look at the life of any individual person and see within them both sin and grace. But appealing to and building upon the grace already at work in the sinner, be it the individual or the society, is never sufficient, though it may be a great place to begin. This is Milbank's

critique. And it is here that we may see how one need not be forced to choose Boff *or* Milbank. Rather, these are two valuable moments within the political theological enterprise.[324]

Conclusion

Returning, then, to the question of how exactly the conclusions of the social sciences and of classical theology interact with one another, we can state it thusly: Social theories work upon the situation of our times to produce "the political." The revelation of Jesus Christ works upon the existential questions of our time, to produce "the theological." In light of those two works, the time comes for classical theology to turn to "the political" to produce a properly political theology. The preceding processes of mediation protect against a simplistic attempt at political theology that would presume that Scripture can be directly applied to contemporary political situations. Such a naïve approach fails to account for both the complexity and nuance of Scripture, as well as the complexity of the contemporary political situation.[325]

Additionally, the task of political theology is not to define or prescribe the political activity of believers. Though concrete actions may well be derived from the work of a political theologian, it is not in the purview of the theologian *qua* theologian to advocate for specific action. This is because the theologian, as such, even the political theologian who has at his or her disposal the whole range of socio-analytic and hermeneutic mediations is still operative in the realm of the theoretical.

The relationship between political theology and Christian political praxis is thus essentially a dialectical one. They must remain mutually informative. Boff diagrams the relationships described above as follows.[326]

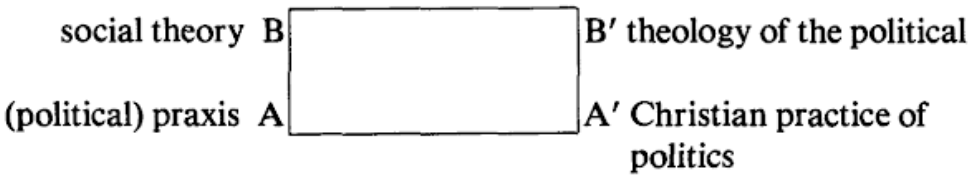

Diagram 3

The relation B-B[1] is socio-analytic mediation. The relation between B[1] and A[1] includes hermeneutic mediation. Political theology, therefore, as was stated previously, exists at the intersection of social theory and the faith and practice of the living Christian community. Political theology loses itself when it severs either tie.[327] The perennial temptation (it seems) of the political theologian is to relate directly from B[1] to A. Boff soundly rejects this possibility: "A 'secular' theology, in proportion as it loses the identifying references of faith (A[1]), can only become social theory (B)—and social theory of the worst kind, because it will be no more than an ideological substitute for the genuine social sciences."[328] This is the ongoing danger of political theology in the contemporary context, seduced as it is by "secular," "atheistic," and "post-Christian" theologies, which Boff names as "truly absurd notion[s]."[329]

Whatever fruit is to be born from the practice of an atheistic theology, it is absolutely *not* to be found in the realm of politics precisely because of the necessarily dialectical nature of theory and praxis. And the secular political theologian emerges from no concrete theological community, and is therefore playing at ideology of the worst kind. As Boff intimates, this sort of work is essentially sociology done poorly and

without the constraints of rigorous social science because it hides under the mantle of faith, while simultaneously denying the responsibilities associated with the field of theology. Such political theologians are neither sociologists nor theologians and so make a career out of doing neither well.

With a method for political theology now in place I will proceed following the processes described above. To answer the question of the political theological significance of the doctrine of the Trinity, one must first do the work of hermeneutic mediation. In chapter four I will discuss the nature of the doctrine of the Trinity in its historical and systematic contexts. In chapter five I will turn to the work of socio-analytic mediation, considering the conditions of the present historical-political context. Only then, in chapter six, will we be adequately prepared to answer the question of a trinitarian political theology.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IN HISTORICAL AND DOGMATIC CONTEXT

Introduction

Having established a methodological approach to political theology, I begin in this chapter with what was defined by Clodovis Boff as the work of hermeneutic mediation. That is to say, in this chapter my concern is theology *qua* theology. In this initial step, one must avoid the temptation to immediately politicize the content of theology. The only goal in this section will be to express the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity in accordance with the received tradition. It will be that understanding of the doctrine, in its classical orthodox formulation, that must then later serve as the formal object of political theological inquiry.

Therefore, the present chapter will proceed in two major sections. In part one, the Trinity will be treated historically as it developed out of Sacred Scripture, through the Church Fathers, and reaching a critical point of articulation in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. I will specifically be treating the development of the so-called psychological analogy for the Trinity. This is due largely to the fact that from the Fathers, but especially in Aquinas, the psychological model has been such a central way of approaching the doctrine. Until very recently it has been the dominant model for understanding trinitarian theology. So if there is to be a recovery of a more classical, orthodox understanding of the Trinity it will begin with a return to the psychological model.

What one finds, especially in Aquinas, is a beautiful understanding of the nature of salvation as participation in the life of the triune God. In fact, as we shall see, this

soteriological criterion is central to separating the orthodox trinitarian formula from divergent heresies. Only if there is one God in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, does the model of human reconciliation as divinization stand firm. In any other model, the unbridgeable gap between Creator and creature remains such that human beings could never become participants in the eternal life of God.

In part two, I will consider how the doctrine of the Trinity, specifically the psychological analogy, has borne fruit in more recent theologies. In particular I note the work of Bernard Lonergan and his followers who have demonstrated that the psychological analogy is still a "living" idea in the modern world. As Neil Ormerod will argue below, in fact, the psychological analogy is especially pertinent to our time. This is an important consideration. As was discussed in the previous chapter on political theological method, hermeneutic mediation needs to ensure that theology maintains a proper balance between tradition and development—neither ossified nor revolutionary—but a great living organism that continues to grow.

With the help of Lonergan's development of the psychological analogy of the Trinity, it becomes even clearer that the doctrine of the Trinity is essentially soteriological. So much so that a microcosm of the Incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the beatific vision can be seen as contained within the creaturely participations of the triune life. What is taken from this is that the Trinity is no mere doctrine, but is a kind of encryption of the whole Christian proclamation. This will be key to the task of relating the doctrine of the Trinity to political theology, because in this light any secularization of the doctrine is rendered impossible. For to believe in one God in

three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is not just some thing that Christians happen to believe—it is constitutive of Christian faith.

The Psychological Analogy in the Tradition

To sketch, even in brief form, the whole history of the doctrine of the Trinity would be the work a dissertation unto itself. So, for the purpose of refining my inquiry, I will trace the development of this doctrine with special attention paid to the use of the psychological analogy. As has already been discussed in chapter two, and will be discussed further below, the modern attempt at a social analogy for the Trinity is incompatible with traditional orthodox formulations. The psychological analogy, however, has endured from Augustine to Aquinas, with roots in Scripture and the apostolic Fathers, and with modern applications from the likes of Bernard Lonergan and many of his followers.[330]

First, what the psychological analogy is not: This is not in any way an appeal to "psychology" in the ordinary sense of the term. Rather, it is an analogical appeal to the human mind, or more properly the human soul (*psyche*) since the soul, of all the things that we know, is highest and therefore most like God. A psychological analogy to God would be more fitting than analogy from some lower material creature. In brief, the psychological analogy argues that the two processions in God (the Son from the Father, and the Spirit from the Father and the Son) find analogy in the operation of the intellect and the will in the human soul. The procession of the Son from the Father is the eternal act by which the Father knows himself. God's knowledge is pure act; it is not determined by the object known, but vice-versa. God's knowledge of an object is not caused by its

existence, but rather an object's existence is constituted by God's knowledge of it. And insofar as he knows himself, that self-image is subsistent, not as another God, rather as the same God—*consubstantial*.

The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son is the eternal bond of love between the two. This is analogous to the operation of the will in the human soul, because the will is, as it were, a desire that proceeds from the intellect, as opposed to mere passion. The Spirit, therefore, is the mutual love, or self-gift, between the Father and the Son. Because it is precisely the self-gift of the Father and the self-gift of the Son, it is, once again, not another being, but the self-same God. The Son, therefore, is called the Word or Image; the Spirit is Gift, or Love.

The Church Fathers

We see hints of this analogy emerging as early as St. Justin Martyr, who, in *Dialogue with Trypho* 61 refers to Christ as: "the Word of Wisdom, who is himself this God begotten of the Father."[331] Theophilus of Antioch also describes the Word as "internal," when he writes: "having his own Word internal within his own bowels, begot him, emitting him along with his own wisdom before all things."[332] Origen comes even closer to a development of the psychological analogy as it would later be known when he claims that the Son is born of the Father "as an act of the will proceeds from the understanding, and neither cuts off any part nor is separated or divided from it, so after some such fashion is the Father to be supposed as having begotten the Son, His own image."[333]

Tertullian also,

> For before all things God was alone — being in himself and for himself universe, and space, and all things. Moreover, he was alone, because there was nothing external to him but himself. Yet even not then was he alone; for he had with him that which he possessed in himself, that is to say, his own Reason. For God is rational, and Reason was first in him; and so all things were from himself. This Reason is his own Thought (or Consciousness) which the Greeks call λόγος.[334]

He even goes on to appeal to the creation of man in the *imago Dei*, and urges us to consider our own psychological experience of reason as an internal dialogue.[335]

John Henry Newman himself traces the emergence of this psychological analogy from Scripture, up through the ante-Nicene and Nicene Fathers. First he notes the importance of the two key titles of the Second Person: Son and Word. Son denotes his distinction from and relation of origination to the Father, while Word communicates his essential unity and inherence.[336] As Athanasius asserts in *De Synodis*:

> For the Son is the Father's Word and Wisdom; whence we learn the impassibility and indivisibility of such a generation from the Father. For not even man's word is part of him, nor proceeds from him according to passion ; much less God's Word; whom the Father has declared to be His own Son, lest, on the other hand, if we merely heard of 'Word,' we should suppose Him, such as is the word of man, impersonal; but that, hearing that He is Son, we may acknowledge Him to be living Word and substantive Wisdom.[337]

Regarding Sonship, the Scriptures add the qualification: only begotten, μονογενής, so as to distinguish this Son from another common sonship in the New Testament, namely our adoptive relation as children of God. The Son is thereby distinguished from mere creatures as the one who is not adopted but rather is begotten. This generation of the Son, insofar as it is a sharing of the divine nature, paradoxically communicates God's own eternal existence. Therefore, in contradiction to the Arian

thesis, there cannot be a time when the Word was not. The Fathers so guarded this conclusion that there is a universal warning from Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, and Athanasius that Christians ought not speculate too long on the nature of generation.[338] To further analogize the relation of generation as a communication of nature, the Fathers also made use of such analogies as the ray of light from the sun, streams from a fountain, or shoots from a root. In each case what proceeds is of the same substance as that from which it proceeds. Thus, the Nicene Creed: Φῶς ἐκ Φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ [light from light, true God from true God].

Any ambiguities left by the term "Son" are clarified and counter-balanced by use of the title of "Word," (also, "Sophia"). Where the Son teaches us that he is "of God," the Word teaches us that he is "in God."[339] And these two notions together yield the orthodox position. Arius, on the other hand, drove a wedge between "Son" and "Word," arguing that the Son was a superangelic creature, made before time on the pattern of Wisdom and thereby inheriting the title. This spiritual creature was afterwards united to a human body in the person of Jesus Christ.[340]

What existed here in latent form among the earlier Fathers is brought to fruition by St. Augustine of Hippo who was the first to articulate a psychological analogy for the Trinity, albeit somewhat unsystematically.[341] In seeking to articulate that central paradox of Trinitarian theology, how and in what way God can be three-in-one, a trinity in unity, Augustine draws our attention first to the *imago Dei*. If man is made in the image of God, then we should expect to find some vestige or echo of this trinity in the human person. And, of course, we should find it in that dimension of humanity in which the human person is most like God, namely in the interior, spiritual life. For we are not primarily

like God in our bodies, but rather in our souls, which are immaterial. Further, we must locate that aspect of the human soul that is not dependent on sense perception. To the extent that the soul is passive, it is not like God, who exists before and beyond all else that is, and is in no way dependent upon anything else. Thus Augustine writes: "For we both are, and know that we are, and delight in our being, and our knowledge of it." (*De Civitas Dei*, XI.26).

These three operations of the human soul are essentially independent of any other external knowledge or sense perception. In a foreshadowing of the Cartesian *cogito*, over a millennium prior, Augustine demonstrates the certainty of this knowledge. For if I am deceived, Augustine argues, then it nevertheless remains indisputably true that I am, otherwise there is no subject to be deceived. Further, if for this reason I can know with certainty that I am, then I can also know with certainty that I know. And in being and in knowing, I can and do add a third, namely that I love that I am, and I love that I know. Thus we find in the human soul a means of analogizing how and in what way God can be one in three, trinity in unity. He is, he knows, and he loves.

Elsewhere in Augustine's corpus the analogy pivots, taking another starting point, namely that God is love. And love itself, he notes, is essentially triadic, always consisting of a Lover, Beloved, and the Love itself. To better image the Holy Trinity, Augustine must further clarify the analogy to speak of the love of one's self, in which case the Lover and Beloved are one—as is the case with God. But so as not to simply collapse Lover and Beloved entirely, we must revive the distinction made in *De Civitas Dei* between the self as Knower and the self as Known. In one mind there are these two operations: to know and to love, distinct but mutually interdependent. Augustine then finds a third, essential

to the operation of these two, namely, memory. For it is in the memory that what is known is known and what is loved is loved. One might even say that knowledge and love proceeds from memory.

By this means, Augustine has developed a fitting analogy for the Trinity:

> These three then, memory, understanding, and will, are not three lives but one life, nor three minds but one mind. So it follows of course that they are not three substances but one substance. When memory is called life, and mind, and substance, it is called so with reference to itself; but when it is called memory it is called so with reference to another. I can say the same about understanding and will; both understanding and will are so called with reference to another. But each of them is life and mind and being with reference to itself. For this reason these three are one in that they are one life, one mind, one being; and whatever else they are called together with reference to self, they are called it in the singular, not in the plural.[342]

But this is not left as a merely speculative or purely philosophical maneuver, not touching on the evangelical concerns of salvation in Christ. On the contrary, it provides for the Christian a model of salvation that entirely coheres with the biblical data and the apostolic tradition. Salvation as "partakers of the divine nature,"[343] or *theosis* as many of the Fathers would put it, means that we become sharers in God's life and become like God. God is a divine mind, an eternal memory, knowledge, and love of the divine mind itself; and we are already rational creatures, with memory, intellect and will. Thus our participation in the life of God would be to perfectly know and love God, first and foremost. Secondarily, then, we would *properly* know and love ourselves as known and loved by God. For without God our self-knowledge and self-love is distorted and becomes sinful by either pride or despair. But beyond even this, we come to participate in

God's own self-knowledge and self-love, such that in eternity it is truly God that we "see," and know and love.

And this whole theory is deeply informed by the biblical tradition. As the other Fathers had taught, we can best analogize to the Trinity from the human soul because that is the point which is highest and most like God. We are made in the *imago Dei*, as Scripture says. And Augustine emphasizes that in Genesis, God says "our image," not "my image," or "your image," so as to indicate that the image to which we are made is the image of the Trinity itself.[344]

And the *end* of salvation is the knowledge, or vision, of God by which we come to be like him, as Augustine quotes the Epistle of John: "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," and again the Gospel of John: "This is eternal life, as the Truth tells us; to know you, he says, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."[345] Knowing God by "sight," the *beatific vision*, is the constant theme of Scripture and Tradition. And we can see it as an intelligible account of the state of eternal salvation when we come to understand God as the Holy and Blessed Trinity, the eternal One who knows and loves himself.

Thomas Aquinas

Before considering Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity in any detail, it is first necessary to clear some ground and remove the obstacles of common misconceptions. Aquinas has often been criticized for inappropriately dividing the doctrine of God into two treatises—*de Deo uno* and *de Deo trino*. It might seem as if Aquinas is forcing theologians to favor either the unity or the trinity of God over the

other. The charge is that Thomas, in the wake of Platonism, describes God as merely one and relegates his tri-unity to something of an afterthought. If not this, then how can we best explain this division of the doctrine of God?

Aquinas announces right up front that the First Part of the *Summa Theologiae* will be divided into three parts, (1) "the divine essence," (2) "the distinctions of persons," and (3) "the procession of creatures from him."[346] So, as Rudi te Velde so helpfully clarifies, the distinction at work in the *Summa* is "between what God is, his *nature*, and what God does, his *activity*." And this "is inherent to human discourse about God, even though the distinction must be denied of God himself."[347] It is therefore most appropriate to follow this path of reason from divine essence to divine activity, which must then be further divided into divine activity that is immanent and transitive. The former consists of two activities: the intellect and the will. These divine operations do not involve God going out of himself, but remain in him as relative distinctions of the one, numerically identical divine nature. And these immanent actions are the basis for the distinction of Persons. Thus it is because Thomas moves from divine essence to divine act that he moves from *de Deo uno* to *de Deo trino*. Finally, he moves to discuss divine *power*, which concerns the acts of God *ad extra*—the work of *creatio* and *conservatio*. Thus it is not that, for Thomas, the Trinity is subordinate to the one God. "If we were in possession of an adequate concept of God, enabling us to understand what He is, we would grasp immediately the triune character of the divine essence. We would then understand that to be God necessarily means to be one-God-in-three-persons."[348] But by virtue of the nature of human reasoning we understand the immanent divine operations of the processions as distinct from the divine essence according to reason, though they are really identical.

This order, appropriate as it is to the object of inquiry, is not necessary in any and every discussion of God but is simply fitting to the systematic task that Aquinas undertakes in the *Summa*.[349] Despite its position within his systematic work, one cannot conclude that the Trinity is, for Aquinas, a speculative appendix to the doctrine of God. This order (divine essence, divine processions, and divine activity *ad extra*) is "derived from the intelligible nature of the subject under discussion."[350] However, if we were to consider God in the order in which humanity actually comes to know him, then the order would be reversed![351]

Our knowledge of God begins not with God's own essence (as Thomas begins in the *Summa*) but with God's works *ad extra*. And while it is true that by means of purely natural reason we could only proceed from God's created effects to God in his unity, and not to the Trinity, it is nevertheless true that God as triune is "necessary for the right idea of creation." First because the claim that God made all things by the Word separates the Christian notion of creation from mere Platonic emanation. Creation does not flow from God by necessity, but is patterned on the divine intellect. Second, that in God there is a procession of Love shows that "God produced things not because he needed them, but on account of the love of his own goodness."[352]

This is not to undermine the assertion that the doctrine of the Trinity is known only by faith.[353] As Aquinas argues, "the creative power of God is common to the whole Trinity; and hence it belongs to the unity of the essence, and not to the distinction of the persons. Therefore, by natural reason we can know what belongs to the unity of the essence, but not what belongs to the distinction of the persons."[354] In terms of purely rational argumentation, then, one cannot make anything more than an argument of

probability that God is triune.[355] However, in the experience of salvation, as grasped by faith, we necessarily affirm God as triune.[356]

To engage in trinitarian theology, therefore, is already to depart from purely natural theology. To speak of God as triune is to presuppose the experience of grace in the believer and the fact of revelation in history. Therefore, if one is not misled by the order and approach of Aquinas in the *Summa*, one can see that the ultimate impetus for trinitarian theology is to render credible the claim of the gospel, that we are called to participate in the divine nature.

It is not surprising, then, that Aquinas' first question on the Trinity in the *Summa* (q. 27) sets out to contrast the orthodox position with the heresies of Arius and Sabellius. Both Arianism and Sabellianism suppose that there is no diversity within God, that all relations must be grounded in an "outward act." For Arius, the relation between Father and Son is constituted by the creation of the Son; for Sabellius, that relation is constituted by the Incarnation—both of which are works of God *ad extra*. And this is crucial, especially in the case of Arianism, for if the Son and Spirit are only creatures, and not divine by essence, then humanity cannot, by communion with them, attain to divinity by participation. For, "a thing does not become this or that by participation unless it participates in what is this or that by its essence. . ."[357] Thus, if we are to make sense of the claim of humanity's participation in God, then there must be relationality *in* God. Arius denies this by subordinating the Son and Spirit to the position of a creature; Sabellius denies this by claiming that the "Father is called Son in assuming flesh from the Virgin, and that the Father also is called Holy Ghost in sanctifying the rational creature."[358] And "[t]herefore, if no real paternity or filiation existed in God, it would

follow that God is not really Father or Son."[359] And if God is not really Father and Son, then we cannot be children of God by participation.

What, then, can be the ground of real diversity in God, without undermining the divine simplicity? If there is diversity in God, then there must be some kind of "accident" in God—even if predicated analogically. And of the nine categories of accidents in Aristotle, eight of them would require a distinction between the accident and the subject in which the accident inheres.[360] Thus, if the persons of the Trinity were distinguished by quantity, quality, time or place, etc., then one could not assert their numerical identity or equality. The category of "relation" however, does not fall into this trap.[361] As Boethius, for instance, notes:

> It cannot be affirmed that a category of relation increases, decreases, or alters in any way the substance of the thing to which it is applied. The category of relation, then, has nothing to do with the essence of the substance; it simply denotes a condition of relativity, and that not necessarily to something else, but sometimes to the subject itself. . . . Accordingly those predicates which do not denote the essential nature of a thing cannot alter, change, or disturb its nature in any way. Wherefore if Father and Son are predicates of relation, and, as we have said, have no other difference but that of relation . . . it will effect no real difference in the subject . . . the plurality of the Trinity is secured through the category of relation, and the unity is maintained through the fact that there is no difference of substance, nor of activity. . . ."[362]

And if there is relation in God, then what is the nature of that relation? Here Thomas, Arius, and Sabellius are in broad agreement: relation must be grounded in action. "[E]very relation is based either on quantity, as double and half; or on action and passion, as the doer and the deed, the father and the son, the master and the servant, and the like. Now as there is no quantity in God . . . it follows that a real relation in God can be based only on action."[363] But where they depart is that for Arius and

Sabellius the acts of God are external and therefore do not constitute diversity *within* God. Aquinas, on the other hand, invokes the possibility of an immanent act, which remains within the agent.

He explains: "[A]s there is an outward procession corresponding to the act tending to external matter, so there must be an inward procession corresponding to the act remaining within the agent. This applies most conspicuously to the intellect, the action of which remains in the intelligent agent."[364] When the mind engages in the activity of understanding there is a procession of a concept of the object of understanding. For instance, when my intellect knows a dog, a concept of the dog proceeds in my intellect. This object that proceeds is called "the word of the heart." The more perfectly something is known, the more perfectly it is represented in the intellect. And if the object of God's knowledge is himself, and if God's knowledge is supremely perfect, then in the act of knowing himself there is a procession within God of that which is perfectly identical to God.[365]

Regarding the use of this so-called psychological analogy, it is important to remember that it is just that: an analogy. Nothing in the world can perfectly portray the processions in God, which are eternal and constitute an identity in substance.[366] Nevertheless, it is fitting to make use of an analogy from intellectual motion, since God is intelligent, whereas God is not corporeal and thus an analogy based on local motion would be inappropriate. In this way Thomas shows that it is fitting to speak of the procession of a Word in God who is, at once, coequal and coeternal with God.

Subsequently, he intends to show that the language of generation can be used to describe this procession of the Word in God. Of course, by "generation," in God one

cannot refer to the change from existence to non-existence, as the term is used with respect to material beings. This cannot be said of God because God, in his eternal perfection, does not move from potentiality to act. If we thus purify the notion of generation of these material implications, we are left with a notion that is fitting to God, namely: "the origin of a living being from a conjoined living principle . . . by way of a similitude."[367] Now, since the procession of the Word in God is a "living" operation, and likewise proceeds by way of a similitude (insofar as the knower and the object known are perfectly identical), this procession of the Word can properly be called a "generation." And the Word is thereby properly called the Son. In the case of the Father's generation of the Son we have the singular case of the sharing of the numerically identical divine nature of the Father to the Son.

And if there is another procession in God (which we know to be true from Scripture) then it must, like the intellectual procession of the Word, be an *immanent* action. Thus, if there is another procession in God it must be the volitional procession of Love. For "the operation of the will . . . gives rise to a different procession which is that of love, whereby the object loved is in the lover." But this procession of Love is not by way of a similitude, and thus the procession cannot be called "generation," nor can its fruit be called "Son." What is known, namely, God, is present perfectly in the divine intellect by way of a similitude, and what is loved, namely, God, is present in the lover "as the term of a movement in its proportioned motive principle by reason of the congruence and proportion which the principle has for that term."[368] In other words, the lover is moved toward a beloved with whom the lover has a certain congruence and proportion. Since the love of God is the mutual love between the Father and Son, that is,

the love of God for his own Image—this congruence is perfect. Thus the fruit of this second procession may be called Love, or Spirit, insofar as the beloved is "present in a *dynamic* mode, like a vital momentum . . ."[369]

Now, the intellect and the will in God are not really different—for if they were this would deny God's simplicity. Nevertheless, the processions of the will and intellect must be distinguished by means of a particular *order*. For Aquinas, "nothing can be loved by the will unless it is conceived in the intellect. . . . So, although in God the will and the intellect are the same, still, inasmuch as love requires by its very nature that it proceed only from the concept of the intellect, there is a distinction of order between the processions of love and the procession of the Word in God."[370]

Here one encounters the special genius of the trinitarian theology of Thomas Aquinas. For if we are to avoid falling back into the heresies of Arianism and Sabellianism, then it is necessary to assert that the there are *real* (and not merely logical) relations *in* God. And if there is real relation, then there is real opposition, and if real opposition, then real distinction.[371] And the only opposition that can be in God is the opposition of relation since an opposition of affirmation/negation would imply "a difference in being," an opposition of privation/possession would imply an "inequality," and an opposition of contrariety would imply an "essential difference."[372] Further, as was made clear above, if there is a relative opposition in God it must be grounded in immanent action and not in quantity. Thus, the distinctions in God must be grounded in "relative opposition as to origin."[373]

By presenting the distinction of persons within God in this way, Aquinas is able to communicate with clarity how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are both "distinct *and*

inseparable," because a relative cannot exist, or even be thought, without its correlate.[374] For, "as to the distinction of the Persons, which is by relations of origin, knowledge of the Father does indeed include knowledge of the Son, for he would not be Father, had he not a Son; and the Holy Spirit is their mutual bond."[375] And at the same time, the Persons avoid being confused or conflated precisely because they are distinguished by the order of their procession. The Father is that in God which is unoriginate, the Son is that in God which is generated, and the Spirit is that in God which proceeds from both the Father and the Son.[376] For if the Spirit did not proceed from both the Father and the Son then there would be no grounds for the distinction between the Son and Spirit insofar as their difference can only be grounded in the relative opposition as to origin.

And only if there are real relations *in* God can participation *in* God be credible. Otherwise, if the relations of God are always merely external, then God remains an impenetrable monad. Thus, by securing relations in God that are both distinct and inseparable, Thomas has successfully cleared the way for an intimate soteriology of adoption into the life of God.

Aquinas is in perfect harmony with even the most basic reading of the biblical witness when he claims that: "The adoption of the sons of God is through a certain conformity of the image to the natural son of God."[377] By implication, without a natural Son, there can be no adopted children. But how exactly is this conformity to be achieved? First, it would seem, that this invitation can only be open to rational animals, insofar as it is the rational nature that allows one to assume a new form. Aquinas refers to the human being as 'capable of God'—*capax Dei*. "God dwells spiritually in the saints whose knowing and loving soul is capable of God."[378] Contrast this with a stone, for instance.

As a purely material being it can only be transformed by changing its physical shape—and no such changes would make it any more or less like God. Not so for humanity. "Non-intelligent beings . . . possess only their own form; whereas the intelligent being is naturally adapted to have also the form of some other thing; for the idea of the known is in the knower."[379] But that humans are intellectual creatures is not enough to ground a deifying transformation. After all, a person who studies geology is not, by that intellectual action, more like a stone than someone who does not.

That we are fundamentally transformed by loving God—which presupposes knowing God—supposes that processions of knowledge and will exist also in God, such that, in so knowing and loving God we become *like* God. Because stones are not triune, we do not become more like them in knowing and loving them. Thomas himself puts it this way: "Because the Holy Ghost is Love, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Ghost by the gift of charity: hence the mission of the Holy Ghost is according to the mode of charity."[380] In other words, by knowing and loving God we are *deified* precisely because God knows and loves himself in the Son and Spirit. In sum: "As Word and Love are inseparable in the Trinity, so knowledge and love are inseparable in humanity's ascent to God; it is through the interrelationship of intellect and will that we are bound to God, just as the Persons of the Trinity are bound to one another in knowledge and love."[381]

To ensure avoiding errors, two clarifications are immediately in order. First, we are not made like God because, like God, we know and love ourselves—but because God, by his grace, can become the object of our knowing and loving. "If the soul's trinity is the image of God, this is not because it remembers itself, knows itself, and loves itself; but because it can recall, know, and love the One through whom it has been created."[382]

Second, the deifying knowledge of God cannot be a merely philosophical knowledge of God—accessible through natural reason. By means of natural reason we only know God through his effects, and insofar as the works of God *ad extra* are one, then by means of natural knowledge, we know God simply as one, not as triune. To receive the indwelling of the Trinity, in the distinction of Persons, God must be "present to intellectual creatures in a way that lies beyond human comprehension . . . in a purely supernatural manner alone within the deepest sanctuary of the soul."[383]

God is already present as the cause of humanity, in his unity; by grace, God is present as humanity's *end*.[384] To say that this divinizing mode of knowledge is by means of grace means that it is initiated by God's own self-disclosure and not by our rational attempts to find God.[385] Knowledge of God by grace is therefore much like Adam's knowledge of God before sin, that is, "by an internal inspiration from the irradiation of divine Wisdom, in which [Adam] knew God not from visible creatures, but from a certain spiritual likeness imprinted on his mind."[386]

In grace, therefore, the Son comes to us to impart knowledge of God, and the Spirit to impart love of God. And these are affected by an "invisible" mission of the Son and Spirit into the soul. Nevertheless, there is also a "visible" mission of the Son and Spirit—which is fitting to the connatural mode of human knowing.

> God's provision for all things matches the mode of their being. And the mode connatural to human beings is to be guided by the seen toward the unseen; this is why the invisible mystery of God had to be made known to them through visible things. And thus, God has in some sense shown himself and the eternal processions of the persons by making the visible creatures present certain revelatory indicators; similarly, it was congruent for the invisible missions of the divine persons to be manifest through visible creatures.[387]

In summary, for Aquinas, God comes to the soul as Word and Love to impart knowledge and love of God, and God also has come to us visibly as Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, to show us the Father, and visibly in the outpouring at Pentecost, to transform the Church into the image of the Son through love.[388] Therefore, "the grace of the Holy Spirit can make human beings 'adopted children' (the enfiliation of grace), and so receive the patrimony of eternal life (the enfiliation to glory). The image thus puts assimilation to God in the frame of an increasing conformation to the Son in an ever-closer relation to the Father."[389]

Sacred Scripture

Another word must still be said in defense of this classical understanding of the Trinity from a biblical perspective. Karl Rahner complained that: "The psychological analogy of the Trinity neglects the experience of the Trinity in the economy of salvation in favour of a seemingly almost gnostic speculation about what goes on in the inner life of God."[390] But this is far from the case. The psychological analogy coheres with and is rooted directly in the questions of the divine self-revelation and our participation in the divine life, as was clearly discussed above and will be further demonstrated here.

Another common argument raised against classical theism is its being too far removed from the world of Scripture and the more simple and straightforward message of the gospel. I need not recount all of the arguments here, but only note that Matthew Levering's *Scripture and Metaphysics*, wonderfully highlights Aquinas' rootedness in Scripture and his exegetical approach.

Take, for example, John 8:42 which Aquinas cites as the *sed contra* on the question of whether there is procession in God. John 8:42, reads: "I came from God [*Ego enim ex Deo processi* (ἐξῆλθον)]."[391] What is the nature of this procession? Is it the procession of an effect from a cause, as Arius claimed? It cannot be, for all of the reasons against Arianism given above. But again, Aquinas will cite Scripture further: "*Et simus in vero Filio ejus. Hic est verus Deus.* [And we are in his true Son. This is true God.]"[392] The other option is that it is a procession of a cause to an effect. This is the error of Sabellius, "that God the Father is called Son in assuming flesh from the Virgin, and that the Father also is called Holy Ghost in sanctifying the rational creature, and moving it to life." But what other kind of procession can there be? Both Arius and Sabellius make the mistake of taking the *processio* as an external procession. What option is left, but the internal procession, which is the procession of the intellect?

> Since the intellect by the very act of understanding is made one with the object understood. Thus, as the divine intelligence is the very supreme perfection of God the divine Word is of necessity perfectly one with the source whence He proceeds, without any kind of diversity.[393]

Quite apart from any other evidence, the psychological analogy could on these grounds at least be said to be coherent, given that there are a limited number of ways of conceptualizing *processio* without falling into the traps of Arius or Sabellius. But we are not without further evidence. Firstly, that the human person is said to be made in the *imago Dei*, is at least warrant for analogizing from the structure of the human soul to the divine. And what I take to be the most crucial passage of Scripture in a theology of the Trinity comes from the Prologue of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

This passage confronts us with the central paradox of all Trinitarian theology: How is it that something can be both "God" and "with God?" Aquinas, quite apart from the Prologue shows that an intellectual procession explains perfectly this paradox. And in affirmation of this paradigm, that which proceeds from God, and yet is God, the Evangelist rightly calls the Word! It is the procession of a word, even in the human mind, that remains within the mind, though imperfectly. Thus, my thought of myself is not numerically identical in nature to myself (as a creature with imperfect knowledge, my self-perception is filled with both ignorance and self-deception). But not so with God, whose knowledge is perfect. His self-perception, his Word of himself, is so perfect and complete that it can truly be said to be God, while also proceeding from God.

This title of the Word is given always to Christ, the Second Person. The introduction to the First Epistle of John mirrors the Gospel's Prologue, where Christ is called the Word of life, an echo of the creative Word in the Prologue and also in Genesis. And again in the Apocalypse of John,[394] we see Christ: "He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God." And this notion of the divine Word as the divine procession of the intellect also coheres perfectly with the Christological notion of Christ as the self-revelation of God. It is supremely fitting that the Word, by which the Father knows himself, is the self-same Word by which we come to know the Father.

Of course far more common than the title of Word, in the New Testament, is the title of the Son. But these are not foreign to each other. In fact the two are used in close connection in both the Gospel and First Epistle of John. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only

Son from the Father,"[395] and again, "The word of life… the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."[396] As established above, the divine procession of the intellect is justifiably also referred to as a generation. For in the case of generation what generates and what is generated are of the same nature, unlike in the case of creation, where the natures of creator and creature are distinct. Thus Word and Son are two ways of describing the same reality, namely, that from God there is a procession that also shares perfectly in the divine nature. Just as a human father begets a human son, who shares the specifically identical human nature; but God being even more perfect in his generation begets a divine Son, who shares the numerically identical nature.

Still one might say this is all just so much philosophizing, if not for the fact that divine sonship touches the very heart of the New Testament proclamation of salvation. Again from John 1:12 "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." The salvation of humanity is achieved by participating in the Sonship of Christ. But whereas Christ is the only *begotten* Son, we are sons by adoption. And this we see throughout the New Testament, but especially in the Pauline corpus. Crucially, however, Paul construes our adoption as a work of the Spirit: "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"[397] And, "because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"[398]

That the Holy Spirit is the bond of Love between the Father and the Son, the mutual procession of the will, is certainly not demonstrated by these passages, but this

Augustinian conceptualization of the Trinitarian relations strongly coheres with the biblical data. As Paul writes: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."[399] And if we take it as an hypothesis that the Spirit is the shared Love between the Father and the Son, and thus a procession of the will, then the Holy Spirit, when poured out upon humanity must be, as Paul calls it, the Spirit of adoption. For if the Love with which the Father eternally loves the Son is given to us, what else could this make us but sons by grace, rather than nature, that is, sons by adoption? And this is exactly as John describes it: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God."[400]

The psychological analogy for the Trinity, with its roots already in Scripture and the Fathers, comes to fruition in Augustine and finally achieves a full articulation with Thomas. It has been, unquestionably, the dominant model for understanding the triune nature of God. In light of the question of political theology, this historical primacy of the psychological analogy is a huge mark in its favor, because any political theology should try, as far as possible to reckon with theology as it has been received in the tradition. As we have seen, to try and invent theological concepts for the purpose of achieving a political end is a cynical endeavor and belies a practical atheism.

Nevertheless, one may still ask whether the psychological analogy has, within the mainstream theological discourse, fallen so far out of favor as to render it lifeless in the twenty-first century. Many twentieth-century theologians, especially Protestants, were very critical of the psychological analogy. Karl Barth, who was deeply skeptical of natural theology.[401] Jürgen Moltmann, as we have already considered, could not tolerate the supposed overemphasis on divine unity. Wolfhart Pannenberg, similarly, accused the

psychological analogy of describing relations within the Father but not subsistent realities.[402] Finally, one could note Colin Gunton, who sees the psychological analogy as contributing in Western civilization to "the twin blights of individualism and intellectualism."[403]

The Psychological Analogy in Recent Theologies

Whether or not the psychological analogy can have life in the third millennium is the question taken up by Neil Ormerod (a student of Robert Doran, himself a close disciple of Bernard Lonergan), to which he gives a surprising answer. The very premises of the psychological analogy are in tension with much of modern and post-modern thought—and it is for this very reason that the analogy, and by extension the doctrine itself, is a kind of philosophical bulwark.

First, the implicit understanding of the nature of intellectual apprehension is contrary to the "linguistic turn." As I said regarding Lindbeck in chapter two, the notion that doctrine is primarily grammatical can only be taken phenomenologically, not metaphysically. Contrary to the nominalist position, reality, and even understanding itself, has priority over language. The human intellect, imperfect as it is, relies on the passive work of the senses, but then the *intellectus agens* [active intellect] produces a form in the mind that is "adequate" to the object known. An angelic intellect, by contrast, free as it is from material constraints, knows things directly, solely by means of the *intellectus agens*. Further, the divine intellect, so removed from any potentiality, constitutes the existence of the object known, rather than the other way around. God does not know something because it exists, rather it exists because he knows it (or, more

precisely, it exists because he knows *himself* as its Creator). All of this to say, there is a real, metaphysical correspondence between ideas and reality.[404]

Secondly, just as the idea of the procession of the Word implies something critical about the nature of truth, the procession of the Spirit tells us something of the nature of goodness. Just as the intellect is made for truth, the will is made for goodness. The Holy Spirit can be said to be the bond of love between the Father and the Son because they are each supremely good, therefore supremely lovable. Goodness, which elicits love, or intelligent desire, is of an objective quality. The will's procession from the intellect implies this. It is thus not out of passion or whim that the Father loves the Son, but rather the Son is known to be most worthy of love, because the Son is the *summum bonum* [highest good].[405]

Already then, the doctrine of the Trinity, in this classical formulation is seen to have clear social and political implications as it militates against both epistemological and moral relativism. It resists epistemological relativism in that the analogy itself assumes that the rational intellect is designed for the final cause of truth. Likewise, moral relativism, insofar as the will is oriented by nature toward the Good. That truth and goodness are realities towards which the mind naturally tends is a rejection of modern relativism. While Ormerod himself, who first offers this thesis, does not fully expound on these implications, this social-cultural significance of the doctrine of the Trinity in its classical formulation is a radical alternative to those political treatments of the doctrine given in chapters one and two of this dissertation.

According to the standards outlined in chapter three on the nature of hermeneutic mediation in political theology, doctrine must be developed in keeping both with the

received tradition of the Church and its orthodox formulations, but also cognizant of important philosophical developments that must at the very least be reckoned with, if not incorporated. Below, therefore is an offering of a more developed understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Karl Rahner

One of the most well known revivals of Catholic trinitarian theology in the 20th century was offered by the German Jesuit, Karl Rahner. In his essay, *The Trinity*, Rahner attempts to show the transcendental relationship between the experience of God in salvation history and God's inner, trinitarian life. Rahner's transcendental theological method begins with the properly Thomistic notion that "the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower."[406] In other words, if God reveals himself to humanity, then it must be in accordance with a human way of knowing. Therefore, by understanding the human person we can anticipate and retroactively clarify what and how it is that God reveals himself to us.

His transcendental trinitarian theology is expressed in the axiom: The immanent trinity is the economic trinity and vice versa. This is not intended to establish a trivially obvious identity, as if anyone ever supposed that there were two trinities. Nor is it referring to an *absolute* identity. Instead, what is given to us in salvation history is truly identical with who God is, in himself, but what is given to us does not exhaust the identity of God. This is what Rahner means when he describes "the true and authentic concept of grace . . . as *self*-communication."[407] That is, in salvation history, God truly communicates himself. Therefore, "the immanent constitution of the Trinity forms a kind

of *a priori* law for the divine self-communication *ad extra* such that the structure of the latter cannot but correspond to the structure of the former."[408]

But this experience of salvation history that points us toward God as triune is *not*, for Rahner, a three-fold experience. Rahner's trinitarian theology begins with the primacy of the Father. When, in considering salvation history as the "free gratuitous self-communication of God to the spiritual creature in Jesus Christ and in the 'Spirit,'" we must consider this "of God" as already referring to "the Father," after the model of the Greek rather than the Latin tradition.[409] So, ὁ Θεός, that is, the Father, communicates himself to us in the *two* modalities of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

According to Rahner's transcendental trinitarian theology, this two-fold self-communication of God corresponds to a need in the human recipient of revelation. Thus God's self-communication refers to our origin and future. Second, insofar as the divine self-communication "wishes to reach the *whole* of man," it must correspond to the essential dialectic of the human person: history and transcendence.[410] Third, insofar as the human being (as historical spirit) is a *free* being, then divine self-communication must contain two moments: offer and acceptance. Fourth, and finally, the divine self-communication addresses the human being in relation to those two basic elements of human consciousness: knowledge and love.[411] Rahner recognizes that divine self-communication can be understood in terms of other pairs as well, but these four suffice.[412]

Rahner summarizes the first set of aspects (origin, offer, history, truth) in one term, *history*, as representative of the unity of all four. The second (future, acceptance, transcendence, love) is summarized in the term *spirit*. Thus the whole matter can be

summarized simply: "the divine self-communication occurs in unity and distinction in history (of the truth) and in the spirit (of love)."[413] What Rahner means when he refers to the self-communication of God in *history*, clearly refers to the givenness of God the Son in the Incarnation. And the by the self-communication of God in *the spirit*, Rahner points toward the doctrine of "sanctifying and justifying grace . . . a divinizing elevation of man."[414] Of course, these are not extrinsically related happenings, but rather, "this grace was offered by God to all times and to all men in view of and in his absolute willing of Jesus Christ, the God-Man."[415]

It is no surprise then that Rahner affirms that there are "three mysteries in Christianity, no more and no fewer."[416] These three are the Incarnation (the givenness of God in history), grace (the givenness of God in the spirit), and the Trinity (the doctrine by which we affirm that these two modalities of God's givenness constitute the *one* self-communication of God).

But that a transcendental trinitarian theology ought to be constituted in this two-fold structure appears problematic.[417] To start, it remains unclear what he could mean when he says: "Here [in the experience of salvation history] we experience the Spirit, and we experience him as God (who is only one); we experience the Son, as God; and the Father, as God."[418] How, in Rahner's system, do we experience the Father as God? It seems as if the Father is never experienced, as such, but is experienced only as the unoriginate source of the Word and Spirit. Or again, he writes, "The one self-communication of the one God occurs in three different manners of given-ness."[419] But, again, this is contrary to his central thesis that we experience the one God and Father in

two manners of given-ness: history and spirit. Nowhere does he refer to a distinct given-ness of the Father.

Secondly, as Neil Ormerod concludes, Rahner's transcendental trinitarian theology is simply too compact. Though Rahner spends time to develop the intrinsic relationship between the two modalities of God's self-communication, Ormerod still finds the implicit Christology to be problematic. For Rahner, *our* beatific vision is understood on account of the culmination of the life of grace, given in the Spirit, whereas Jesus' beatific vision is understood on account of his divine Sonship. Thus, in Rahner's schema, we are left to wonder how the Incarnation functions as a ground for our experience of the light of glory.[420]

Further, Ormerod notes, if we say, following Rahner, that ὁ Θεός refers to the Father, then, based on passages such as 1 John 3:2 and 1 Corinthians 13:12, one ought to say that the beatific vision constitutes a unique relationship to the Father, and not to the Holy Spirit, as Rahner has it here.[421] Finally, Rahner treats grace too broadly, without any attention given to the traditional distinctions between actual and habitual, operative and co-operative grace. Even the beatific vision gets smuggled in, such that the difference between grace and glory is simply one of degree.[422]

As an alternative to this proposal, I turn to Bernard Lonergan, a Canadian Jesuit, whose development of the doctrine of the Trinity, in continuity with the psychological analogy, avoids many of the difficulties created by Rahner's proposal. He does so by making appropriate distinctions, for instance, between grace and charity, between grace and the beatific vision, while also showing the grounded unity between the Incarnation and our adoption into divine sonship.

Bernard Lonergan

In *De Deo Trino: Pars Dogmatica*, Bernard Lonergan summarizes the doctrine of the Trinity in five theses. The first four can be summarized as follows: (1) God the Father eternally generates the Son as consubstantial with himself. (2) The Holy Spirit is to be adored and glorified with the Father and the Son. (3) Therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have one substance; they are, however, three hypostases distinguished by relative opposition. (4) The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

In the fifth thesis, of central interest to this chapter, Lonergan writes:

> The dogma of the Trinity, which is a mystery in the proper sense, cannot through natural human principles be either understood in itself or demonstrated from its effect. Even after revelation this remains true, although reason illumined by faith can, with God's help, progress towards some imperfect analogical understanding of this mystery.[423]

I will unpack this dense and insightful paragraph point by point. Lonergan offers here a fascinating description of the meaning of "mystery" in this theological sense. He invokes, as a comparison, Newton's first law of motion. This law does not "understand" inertia, or claim to explain it. Instead, the law is posited as a negative claim, denying that inertia is to be explained by any external force or as a matter of mere statistical probability. This insight "illuminates the whole field of science," without actually claiming positive understanding. This, he says, is akin to the function of holy mystery in theology.[424] Or, in Rahnerian terms, mystery refers to that horizon which is itself not comprehended but by means of which everything else is seen.

Lonergan thus affirms, with Thomas Aquinas, that the mystery of the holy Trinity cannot be understood or demonstrated by natural reason. And such is the case with respect to both the existence and the essence of the mystery of the Trinity. This is in contrast to Anselm of Canterbury, who wrote: "For I think that anyone who is investigating an incomprehensible doctrine should be content if by rational inference he comes to recognize that this doctrine is most certainly true—even if he is unable to comprehend how it could be true."[425] For Lonergan, *that* God is triune, and *what* it means that he is, both remain mysterious.

And even in the light of divine self-revelation, its status as mystery is preserved. Therefore imperfect analogies remain essential to our understanding of the doctrine of the triune God.[426] In light of the simplicity of God, the divine essence is identical to his being triune. Therefore to say that the mystery of the trinity can be understood in itself would be to say that the divine essence is understood in itself.[427]

There are cases, however, in which something cannot be understood in itself, but demonstrated nonetheless.[428] For example, certain attributes of God, such as his existence, infinity, perfection, freedom, and so on, as identical with the divine essence, cannot be known in themselves but are nevertheless demonstrable. While these remain known to us only analogically, they are "arrived at with certitude."[429] The analogies for the trinitarian mystery, on the other hand, serve only as hypotheses and no demonstration follows from them.[430]

It might be objected that a natural demonstration for the Trinity has been provided. Certainly, many have attempted such a demonstration, while others have sought to show that the Trinity has been arrived at outside of categorical revelation by

other non-Christian sources. To the latter point, Lonergan clarifies that the use of λόγος or πνεύμα, or three in one, or any other vague generality, does not constitute an equivalent to the Christian confession of the triune God.

The understanding of the mystery attained through revelation, insofar as it is an understanding of God and not merely some proposition about God, must be mediated, since God cannot here be known immediately. And because, as was already affirmed, that knowledge of the Trinity is not mediated by God's created effects, it remains only to be mediated by God's own Word. Revelation does enlighten reason, enabling it to arrive at analogies of the Trinity, but these analogies retain the status of hypotheses.

Lonergan shows this to be the case by means of the following axiom: "So long as a cause remains, its effect remains."[431] And the *cause* of the holy Trinity being a mystery to us is *not* because it has not been revealed to us. It is because a proper understanding, and knowledge in itself, can only be had in the immediate vision of God. Since revelation does not offer this, the Trinity remains a mystery.[432]

But Lonergan so helpfully clarifies that there are two ways of approaching a subject matter. One is the "way of analysis," this refers to the actual discovery of whatever datum is being considered. And in this respect, the doctrine of the Trinity begins with divine revelation. However, there is also the "way of synthesis," or the way of teaching, in which one is free to begin with whatever is most accessible: philosophy, natural analogies, and so on.[433]

Thus, in light of revelation, the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity is certain, while knowledge of the Trinity, remains analogical and imperfect. This is because, as Aquinas taught, the proper object of human knowledge is "nature existing in corporeal matter."[434]

Immaterial substances, whether created or uncreated, therefore remain unknown to us. Thomas rejects the Platonic notion that we know Ideas first. Rather, "our intellect in its present state of life has a natural relationship to the natures of material things; and therefore it can only understand by turning to the phantasms."[435] Immaterial substances, therefore, cannot be known, in themselves, by the human mind. So God is not known in himself by us in this life.

That God is known by way of analogy is to say that what cannot be known in itself is known by way of similarity to something else or not at all. Despite this similarity, by which we know something of the mystery, there remains an infinite *dissimilarity*. Such will always be the case when the infinite is known by means of a finite analogy.[436] This will be a very important point of consideration in the final chapter.

Despite all of this, Lonergan maintains that the progressive development of the doctrine of the Trinity is still a coherent task. Reason, illumined by faith, is called to assist in this work. The definitions of Nicea and Constantinople of the Son and Spirit as consubstantial with the Father are direct proof of the progressive nature of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is possible, in some cases, because what is implicitly revealed comes to be explicitly taught by the Church.[437] Thus it is the task of the theologian, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, not to invent or even to discover any new element, but to use reason, illumined by faith, to draw out explicitly the implicit claims of divine revelation.

Lonergan thereby affirms the definition of theology as a science, whose task it is to have a "correct understanding of those truths hidden in God that have been divinely revealed to us."[438] Consideration of the divine mystery always proceeds by way of analogies and claims only imperfect knowledge. Nevertheless, it strives always to a

clarification and perfection of the truth that is revealed. The task of trinitarian theology is unceasing.

For the sake of the advancement of trinitarian theology, therefore, Lonergan proposes to build upon the classical analogies for the Trinity. Part of this agenda is the transposition of scholastic terminology into something more contemporary. But, substantively, this task also includes the perfecting of an always-imperfect science.

Because human knowledge is grounded either in external sense-experience or internal consciousness, so too, any analogy that provides understanding will be an analogy from something in either experience or consciousness. In trinitarian theology, the two great examples of these are Athanasius, who described the procession of the Word as light from the sun, and Origen, who described procession of the Word as an act of will proceeding from the mind.[439] The latter, psychological model of the Trinity, from Augustine to Aquinas, has continued to be developed, and Lonergan intended to develop it further.

Lonergan begins his treatment of a revised psychological analogy for the Trinity by enumerating four categories of "psychological reality." The first is the immediate and purely private data of consciousness. The second is shared consciousness, mediated publicly through language. The third is an introspective attending to private consciousness. The fourth is a philosophical investigation of knowledge, volition, and their limits. Lonergan confesses that only the first two modes of consciousness would have been accessible to the evangelists and apostles.[440] Nevertheless, because they did not reflect explicitly upon these psychological realities, does not mean that they did not implicitly acknowledge them. It is obvious that the New Testament does not organize an

explicit psychological analogy of the Trinity. But that the data of the New Testament cannot appropriately be organized in this manner does not follow.

Lonergan demonstrates that the evangelists and apostles did indeed have an implicit awareness of two basic psychological operations. First, Lonergan asks the reader: Have you ever spoken the truth because of your grasp of the evidence for it? Second, Have you ever made a virtuous choice because of an acknowledged moral obligation?[441] Any and every person, except perhaps small children or those of an unhealthy mind, will answer "yes" to these questions—even if these faculties were only *exercised* and not *conceptualized*. The use of these concepts may be limited, but the experience of them is undoubtedly universal. And we can see these concepts employed, in a simplified and symbolic way, whenever the New Testament treats of truth and falsity (as categories of the intellect) or good and evil (as categories of the will).

With respect to the activity of God we see that, especially in the Fourth Gospel, the Son is identified as one who knows and speaks the truth about the Father and the Spirit is identified as one who hears and accepts what he receives from the Father and Son. According to Lonergan a psychological analogy for the Trinity can thus be extracted from the New Testament in the following way.

1) In God there is light and love.[442] First, ὁ Θεός, should be read here as referring to the Father. Secondly, both light and love are here read in the psychological sense, that is, the light *of the truth*, and the love *of the good*.[443]

2) There is in God an eternal Word.[444] In view of the identification of the Father as light and love, then one must understand the Word as a Word of "true judgment that proceeds from the grasp of evidence."[445] This is opposed to the traditional understanding

of the Word as merely a word of intellectual apprehension. And because it is the Word, not only of *light*, but of *love*, one may say that, "the divine Word is not a concept, not even a judgment of fact, but a judgment of value."[446]

3) There is in God one who in a holy way hears and accepts truth.[447] Here again, the traditional psychological analogy is modified. The Love of God is not merely the procession of the Spirit, as if love were the consequence, rather than the origin of the processions. Instead, the procession of the Spirit is likened to "a moral act of the will that proceeds from a true value judgment."[448] So, the Spirit is the procession of Love, but just as the Son is Light from Light, so the Spirit is Love from Love.

So, Lonergan's approach to the psychological analogy can be summarized in the following passage:

> The psychological analogy, then, has its starting point in that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love. Such love manifests itself in its judgments of value. And the judgments are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving. Such is the analogy found in the creature.
>
> Now in God the origin is the Father, in the New Testament named *ho Theos*, who is identified with *agape* (1 John 4:8, 16). Such love expresses itself in its Word, its Logos, its *verbum spirans amorem*, which is a judgment of value. The judgment of value is sincere, and so it grounds the Proceeding Love that is identified with the Holy Spirit.[449]

Lonergan's contribution to the renewal of a psychological analogy is commendable on at least three counts. First, he adequately justifies the task of a psychological analogy, even though Scripture obviously does not attend to distinct psychological acts of "knowing" and "willing." He does this by showing how these

categories are implicitly active whenever one talks of "true or false" and "good or evil," which Scripture clearly does.

Second, Lonergan works to transpose the traditional language of the psychological analogy into language that is more Scriptural and thus tied more closely to the missions of the divine Persons. This is especially true of his account of the Spirit who is described not merely as the procession of God's will, or even as the Love of God, but more specifically as that in God which hears and accepts the truth. The receptive principle makes sense in the life of the immanent Trinity, as the Spirit is the bond of love between Father and Son. But it also makes sense, and indeed is grounded in, the fact that our reception of Jesus as Lord is the work of the Spirit.[450] And this is the third point: Lonergan shows the intrinsic connection between the psychological model of the processions and the missions in the economy of salvation.

However, as Robert Doran has pointed out, Lonergan's psychological analogy, while moving explicitly to affirm Love as the starting point, and not just the end result, the overall model of the psychological analogy "is still in terms of the emanation of a purely cognitional judgment."[451] Lonergan's psychological analogy remains an analogy from natural consciousness. An analogy based on natural, or "interiorly differentiated consciousness," is what Augustine and Aquinas have expounded. This is what Lonergan has taken up above. Yet this psychological analogy makes no appeal, whether direct or indirect, to the difference that God makes on human consciousness.

An analogy proceeding from a supernatural, or "religiously differentiated consciousness," is, Doran thinks, the future of Trinitarian theology. To this end, Doran directs our attention to Lonergan's four-point hypothesis, which Lonergan offered up late

in life. It remained undeveloped but points toward the possibility for a new way of understanding the doctrine of the Trinity, by means of a supernatural analogy.

Lonergan's Four-Point Hypothesis

> There are four real divine relations, really identical with the divine substance, and therefore there are four very special modes that ground the external imitation of the divine substance. Next, there are four absolutely supernatural realities, which are never found uninformed, namely, the secondary act of existence of the incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory. It would not be inappropriate, therefore, to say that the secondary act of existence of the incarnation is a created participation of paternity, and so has a special relation to the Son; that sanctifying grace is a participation of active spiration, and so has a special relation to the Holy Spirit; that the habit of charity is a participation of passive spiration, and so has a special relation to the Father and the Son; and that the light of glory is a participation of sonship, and so in a most perfect way brings the children of adoption back to the Father.[452]

Straightaway one can see that Lonergan is here operating with special theological categories and not merely with general categories (knowing, willing, hearing, loving, and so on). At the same time, there is no purely supernatural starting point for theology. An analogy can only function properly insofar as it is rooted in something of which we are already aware. So, even here, we are dependent in part upon an appeal to natural knowledge.[453] In this case, one's understanding of the Trinity begins with the experience of love. By analogy with the natural human experience of being in love one can refer to the supernatural experience that Lonergan refers to as "the dynamic state of being in love in an unqualified sense."[454] This is a transposition of the experience of sanctifying grace—the love that is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). From such a state of being in love there is a habitual, active loving that flows outward—this is the habit of charity. Because there is no immediate data for either the Incarnation

or the beatific vision, these must be understood only by extrapolation from this initial experience of the dynamic state of being in love in an unqualified sense. Therefore what is given here is a psychological analogy, but one based on engraced, rather than merely natural, consciousness.

This state of being in love (sanctifying grace), Lonergan identifies as a created participation in active spiration and so gives us a special relation to the Holy Spirit. The implicit methodology employed here is a synthesis of trinitarian procession and mission as it attempts to show the relationship between the breathing of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity and the sending of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation. The effect in the creature of the Holy Spirit being sent (parallel to active spiration) is the experience of being engraced. In this experience there comes an implicit transcendental knowledge of God as love.[455] This participation in sanctifying grace is therefore concretely manifested in the theological virtue of *faith*—when faith is understood as the awareness of being loved by God.

As Lonergan describes it in *Method in Theology*, faith is a knowledge born of a judgment of value by a person in love. Thus in grace we receive an "orientation towards the mystery of love and awe . . . objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute intelligence and intelligibility." In this state, this openness to this new horizon, there remains only one question: "Will I love him in return, or will I refuse?"[456]

The response of affirmation to this love, that is, the decision to love in return (habit of charity), Lonergan identifies as a participation in passive spiration and so gives us a special relation the Father and Son. In the same way that the being-breathed of the Holy Spirit is the reciprocal yet simultaneous "response" of the Father and Son breathing,

so too our loving is a reciprocal response to the Father and Son engracing us with the Holy Spirit. Clearly, this is a manifestation of the theological virtue of *charity*.

Thus far we have seen how we participate in both the active and passive relation between the Spirit and the Father-and-Son (together as the single principle of the spiration of the Holy Spirit). But by means of our receiving the Holy Spirit and responding in love, we are thereby welcomed to share in the very relation between the Father and the Son. Thus, on one hand, we participate in the relation of filiation, that is, we are adopted as children of God and are given, as our eschatological inheritance, the light of glory. This, in turn, is only possible because it is grounded in the act of God by which he has reconciled himself to humanity in the Incarnation of the Word (a created participation in the relation of paternity).

The light of glory, or beatific vision, Lonergan identifies as a created participation in divine filiation and so gives us a special relation to the Father. In the eschatological vision of God we participate in and imitate the Son "whose entire being is a relation to the eternal Father from whom he proceeds."[457] In our participation in and imitation of the being-generated of the Son, we are adopted into the life of God, by which we call God Father. This relation to the Father is fulfilled only in the light of glory. Yet, while we do not now participate fully in the light of glory, it is presently experienced and made manifest in the theological virtue of hope.

Our reception of sanctifying grace, our expression of the habit of charity, and our proleptic sharing in the light of glory, each represent a different dimension of the human participation in the divine nature, manifested in the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Yet this human participation in the divine nature has, as the condition for its

possibility, the divine participation in the human nature—that is, in the Incarnation of the Word. In other words, we may share in God's life only because God has taken the initiative by sharing in our life.

The "secondary act of existence of the assumed humanity of the incarnate Word," Lonergan identifies as a created participation in divine paternity and so gives creation a special relation to the Son. Parallel to the Father generating the Son in eternity is the Father's sending of the Son in the Incarnation. The relation of paternity is, economically speaking, the speaking of the Father. Thus it is that Scripture claims that Jesus Christ, as the incarnate Word, did not speak on his own, but the Father who sent him commanded him to say all that he has spoken.[458] Creation, as it were, imitates the Father only in the Person of Jesus, such that he can uniquely claim, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,"[459] and that no one comes to the Father, except through him.[460]

It is not clear from Lonergan's presentation, in which order one ought to progress when understanding these participations in the divine relations from a phenomenological perspective. Which of these relations is first experienced consciously? And in what order is the human mind naturally directed to consider each in turn? I would suggest that one begins with the active habit of charity, which, only after it is expressed, turns to find sanctifying grace as the condition for its possibility. For it is not as if one at first comes to understand himself to be the recipient of God's unconditional love and then, after deliberation, consciously decides to reciprocate this gift by love for God and humanity. While it is true that "We love because he first loved us,"[461] it seems that noetically, the work of sanctifying grace is only grasped as the ground of the love that we share. Only when understood in this order can one make sense of those who authentically love their

neighbors, without an explicit knowledge of or love for God. A Lonerganian transcendental trinitarian theology therefore begins with the habit of charity and progresses to the work of sanctifying grace as the condition for its possibility.

Now, just as spiration has as its active principle not simply the Father or the Son, but both together, so too, our created participation in active spiration points us not toward either paternity or filiation, but to the relationship as such. In other words, in our relation to the Spirit, grounded in the experience of loving and being loved by God, we find ourselves as having entered into a relationship already constitutive of God's inner life, the relation between Father and Son.

Yet, in our coming to awareness of this relationship there is nevertheless a degree of noetic priority to our participation in the being-generated of the Son, his filiation—just as, earlier, there was noetic priority to our participation in the being-breathed of the Spirit, his passive spiration. For one can realize that to enter into this relation of loving and being loved by God is only possible insofar as it is grounded in the eschatological consummation of this relation in the beatific vision. So while *chronologically*, the experience of love precedes the light of glory, the latter must nevertheless be seen as the condition for the possibility of the former. For if, hypothetically, the beatific vision was to be withheld from humanity, then the experience of being loved by and loving God would be exposed as a ruse. If we were without the eschatological hope of full adoption into Sonship, then our reception of the Spirit, by which we cry out, "Abba, Father," would be a lying spirit. In this sense, the theological virtue of hope is the condition for the possibility of faith and love. In other words, our participation in filiation is the condition for the possibility of our participation in active and passive spiration.

And our participation in the vision of God, experienced proleptically in this life as hope, has as the condition for its possibility, the assumption of human nature by the Word of God. That is, creation's participation in filiation (by which we are adopted as children of God) is grounded in creation's participation in paternity, which occurs exclusively in the humanity of Jesus—who is not adopted, but is the only-begotten Son of the Father. It is only because God has graciously assumed a human nature that we can, in turn, participate in the divine nature, experienced now in faith, hope, and love, and culminating in the beatific vision.

We arrive at these four: the habit of charity, sanctifying grace, the light of glory, and the Incarnation because each is a condition for the possibility of the former. They form a web of transcendental conditions and also correspond to the four-fold relations of the triune God. But most importantly, these are the four instances of a created participation in the divine life. The most singular of these, of course, is the hypostatic union, the personal assuming of a created human nature by the Second Person. More generally, and derivative of this first participation, is the beatific vision in which the saints and angels adore God's glory and thereby participate in his life. In this world, of course, sanctifying grace comes to us principally through the sacraments, wherein God's power and presence is communicated to us through the sacramental form and matter. And finally, there is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the soul is united to God in an anticipatory way. By virtue of this habit of charity in the soul, the believer is said to be in a state of grace—so while the believer does not in this moment experience the beatific vision, they are experience a pledge of this future redemption by means of this theological virtue.

This should not be misunderstood as an attempt to deduce the doctrine of the Trinity, a priori from the natural state of being in love. As was shown above, Lonergan insists on the perpetual mystery of the Trinity. What is offered here is, instead, something like a transcendental "phenomenology of grace," that begins with the facticity of God's revelation in the experience of salvation yet inquires as to how we can show its Trinitarian structure. As such, what Lonergan has offered here is very significant in the development of the doctrine. For what we see in this four-point hypothesis is that not only is the doctrine of the Trinity an appropriate starting point for systematic theology, but that it is, in fact, an anticipation of systematic theology. The whole soteriological drama is, as it were, embedded in the identity of God as triune. Of Lonergan's four-point hypothesis, Robert Doran writes: "The hypothesis explicitly embraces the doctrines of the triune God, the incarnate Word, the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, and the last things, and it does so in such a way that the mysteries affirmed in these doctrines are related systematically and synthetically to one another."[462]

One way of summarizing the difference between Rahner's and Lonergan's approach is that the former is *synchronic*, while the latter is *diachronic*. Rahner tries to show how the trinitarian structure of God's self-communication is visible at once. Whereas Lonergan's hypothesis proceeds along a certain path, showing how one dimension conditions another. This diachronic approach, I believe, allows a transcendental trinitarian theology to operate with more subtlety and nuance, and for that reason should be taken to be superior to the Rahnerian proposal.

Criticism

According to Charles Hefling, Lonergan's four-point hypothesis is a *hapax legomenon*—appearing there and nowhere else—and is not in keeping with the rest of his work.[463] Whenever Lonergan lists the finite participations in God, they are always three: the beatific vision, the hypostatic union, and sanctifying grace. The habit of charity nowhere else appears as a participation separate from sanctifying grace.[464]

That there should be only three, and not four, participations in God is intuitive after all. For while there are four relations (paternity, filiation, active spiration, passive spiration), and while the Persons of the Trinity are *subsisting relations*, these four relations do not constitute four persons because the principle of active spiration is not really distinct from the relations of paternity and filiation taken together. So, Hefling argues, "of the four, only three are really distinct, since it is with these that the divine Persons are identical."[465]

Hefling offers up his own account of the psychological analogy to illustrate how, of the four relations, only three are really distinct. There are, in God, two processions, which Hefling likens to (1) "the conscious emergence of affirmative judgment." This is the procession of the Word, taken, after Lonergan, as a Word of a judgment of value. (2) "the conscious emergence of benevolent commitment to that value." This is the procession of Love. The first procession is grounded in "the act of recognizing and grasping the sufficiency of evidence for goodness and value."[466] The second procession, however, is grounded not in a separate act, but in the grasping of evidence and the affirmative judgment, taken together. That is to say, when I recognize that something is good and affirmatively judge it *as good*, then the second act of desiring that good is not

based on anything other than my recognition and affirmation of it as good. Spoken in theological terms: the Father is what gives rise to the affirmation of the good as lovable, the Son is that affirmation, and the Spirit is a commitment to the good, grounded in the prior acknowledgment of its goodness.

Turning then to the created participations in these three subsistent relations, the Son alone, in the Person of Jesus, enjoys a created participation in the "paternity," in the hypostatic union. Second is the beatific vision, in which "the blessed know as they are known." That is, in the light of glory, the saved shall see as the Father sees, and because what God sees he sees "in the Word," therefore the beatific vision is a created participation of relation to the Father in "filiation."[467] At this point, one would expect, having affirmed created participations in paternity and filiation, which constitute special created relations to the Son and Father, respectively, that Hefling would then turn to affirm a special created relation to the Spirit, which would be by way of *active spiration*. Yet Hefling claims that because it is "through the Spirit, through proceeding, 'spirated' Love, that the Father and the Son love themselves and others as well," creation therefore, in sanctifying grace (the state of loving and being loved) participates in *passive spiration*, constituting a special relation to the Father and the Son.

In condensing Lonergan's four-point hypothesis to three points, Hefling has not merely cut one of the points out. In *De Deo Trino*, Lonergan had identified sanctifying grace as a created participation in active spiration and the habit of charity as a created participation in passive spiration. Hefling synthesizes the two by identifying sanctifying grace as a created participation in passive spiration.

Despite the fact that the resultant three-point hypothesis is asymmetrical, compared to its four-point alternative, Hefling defends his synthesis of grace and charity arguing that the very distinction between sanctifying grace and the habit of charity is somewhat dubious. Scholastic theology drew a distinction between the two based on metaphysical premises that Hefling considers no longer viable. The distinction is based on Philip the Chancellor's theorem of the supernatural, which suggested a structural parallel between the natural and supernatural orders. In this case: "as the *soul* stands, in natural order, to *will* and *intellect*, of which it is the principle, so *grace* stands, in the supernatural order, to *charity* and *faith*."[468] By Hefling's lights, therefore, one should not construe grace and charity as two distinct participations in the divine life since charity is merely an actualization of grace. Every act of charity is dependent on the habit of charity proximately, and sanctifying grace remotely. So, to identify them as separate is redundant, for every act of charity is grounded simultaneously in the habit of charity and, more generally, in sanctifying grace.[469] And insofar as the Lonerganian project is interested in grounding a new psychological analogy in *consciousness* (if that is, in fact, what Lonergan is up to), then the question becomes whether charity and grace are separate in consciousness. Hefling would suggest that they are not.[470]

While Hefling's critique of the four- and recommendation of three-point hypothesis has its merits, several questions remain outstanding. First, to his suggestion that grace and charity should not be distinguished as separate participations in the divine life because one is dependent upon the other is to ignore the transcendental nature of Lonergan's project. It is precisely because sanctifying grace is the condition for the possibility of the habit of charity that the two should be distinguished and put in relation.

Of course they do not stand in mutual opposition to one another, but to claim this was never Lonergan's, Doran's, or anyone's intent.

Second, there is a certain symmetry in Hefling's suggestion that, in this life, we participate in passive relation of the being breathed of the Spirit as sanctifying grace, and in the life to come, we participate in the passive relation of the being generated of the Son as the beatific vision. One can see the appeal to the claim that insofar as we participate in the relations of God, that we share only in the passive relations (filiation, passive spiration) and not in the active relations. But the problem arises when one sees the asymmetry in Hefling's proposal. For why should he deny altogether that there is any created participation in active spiration? There is, after all, a created participation in the relation of paternity, namely the Incarnation. On this all are in agreement. In parallel to this, therefore, why should Hefling not—at the very least—affirm a created participation of active spiration in the sending of the Holy Spirit?

In defense of the distinction between sanctifying grace and the habit of charity as participations in active and passive spiration, respectively, I would appeal to Doran and his distinction between operating and co-operating grace, and entitative versus operative habits. Operating grace refers to the sole movement of God in healing and justifying the soul; co-operating grace refers to the strengthening of our will and the granting of the capability of operating.[471] Sanctifying grace contains both of these dimensions; as such it is an entitative habit. But charity, insofar as it is the actualization of what is given in co-operating grace, is distinct from that grace; as such it is an operative habit. Doran summarizes it in this way: "The gift of God's love is sanctifying grace, the horizon born of that love consists of faith and hope, and the disposition that proceeds from the gift and

the horizon together constitutes charity."[472] Put another way, this distinction amounts to the real distinction between being loved and loving.[473]

Hefling is, in some sense, right to show that our participation in filiation and passive spiration is not on par to a created participation in the active relations (paternity and active spiration). But just as there is a created participation in paternity, so too there is a created participation in active spiration. The difference is simply that there is only one created participant in the generation of the Son, namely, the human Jesus. Yet, there are many participants in the spiration of the Spirit, namely, those who are recipients of sanctifying grace. As such, we come to have a unique relation to the Son only by means of the Spirit who conforms us into his image, culminating in our sharing in his beatific vision of the Father.

In the end, Lonergan's development of the psychological analogy for the Trinity, and his transcendental approach to the doctrine, remains the strongest and most worthy of further research. His treatment is exactly the kind of balance required in the process of hermeneutic mediation. His categories are new, his ideas innovative, but he nevertheless remains firmly within the orthodox formulations and the received tradition.

Conclusion

It was the purpose this chapter simply to provide an account of the doctrine of the Trinity, to prepare, as it were the *formal object* of political theology that will later be the lens upon which we read the contemporary political situation. This preparation of the *material object* (the socio-analytic mediation) is the work of the next chapter. In summary, therefore, this chapter has identified the significance, not only historically, but

even and especially today, of the psychological analogy for the Trinity. As Neil Ormerod illuminated, the psychological analogy reminds us of the incompatibility of Christian revelation with purely nominalist or relativist perspectives, especially in the realm of morality. But this social critique only holds insofar as the psychological analogy is granted.

The more important work of this chapter, therefore, was to defend the psychological analogy by demonstrating that it remains a living and dynamic idea. Lonergan's creative retrieval and development of trinitarian theology continues to bear fruit in the twenty-first century. What is most important regarding Lonergan's so-called four-point hypothesis, however, is the way in which it exposes the doctrine of the Trinity as a kind of kaleidoscopic view of all of Christian theology. As we consider each of its parts, we find microcosms of the whole of systematic theology. Many of the Trinitarian revivalists of the twentieth century who hailed the doctrine of the Trinity as central to the whole of theology somewhat disingenuously then present this doctrine as propping up their own particular theological preoccupation. Barth, for instance, treats the Trinity under the lens of divine revelation,[474] Moltmann, divine suffering, and so on. Lonergan's trinitarianism shows much more powerfully why this doctrine is so fundamental, by demonstrating that it is quite literally the hub around which all other doctrines rotate. The Trinity is the organizing principle of all of systematic theology.

Furthermore, Lonergan properly identifies the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity, following the classical formulation, as being rooted in the experience of participation in the triune God. Along these lines, Karen Kilby, in response to the question of the Trinity's political ramifications rightfully reminds us:

> [T]he Trinity must be considered, not as something we stand outside of and gaze at, but as something with which we are involved. When we pray, it is to the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. The Spirit works in us, catching us up into a movement, a life, which is trinitarian. Whatever the pattern of the Trinity is, whatever the life of the Trinity is, it is something we find ourselves in the midst of. . .[475]

It is for this reason that the doctrine of the Trinity can admit no "secularization." It cannot be treated as an abstract form to be emptied of its accidental, material content. The doctrine of the Trinity is, at its most essential level, the Christian proclamation *as well as* the very life of Christian sanctification. To use the Trinity as a model for any other system, political or even ecclesiological, is to fail to grasp this immensity of the doctrine. It is not an idea that was borrowed from any other faith, nor could it ever be transmitted to another faith—because it simply *is* the Christian faith. It is the great synthesis of the content of Christian revelation and it is the reality of the Christian experience of salvation as divinization.

CHAPTER FIVE

TODAY'S SOCIAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The task of socio-analytic mediation, described by Clodovis Boff, and recounted in chapter three, leads us to the task of discerning our *kairos*. What are the "signs of the times"?[476] The discernment of the *kairos* is not purely analytic but requires a prudential judgment in which the theologian, as an active and critical member of society, comes to understand certain elements of society as pertinent to theological reflection.[477] In this chapter, I will argue that, in this early part of the twenty-first century, our *kairos* is to be found in the resurgence of aggressively nationalistic movements.

In the 24-hour news cycle, and with the endless political commentary of social media, it can sometimes be difficult to discern what are the truly significant political occurrences of a given moment. But several years on, the events of 2016 (the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit referendum) remain preeminent in their visibility and impact on the discourse surrounding Western politics. These twin moments call for analysis, as they are the most prominent indicators of a larger movement in the 2010s of a new nationalism.

Even prior to the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump, this rising trend was already visible in the current regimes of Russia and China. Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping both have offered their populations a return to tradition and the reclamation of bygone national splendor.[478] In the last decade we have seen the rise of Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe of Japan, Giuseppe Conte of Italy, and Presidents Andrés Manuel López

Obrador of Mexico, and Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, all of who show signs of the global rise in nationalist fervor and are often accompanied by right-leaning populism.

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to offer at least a functional definition of nation and nationalism as they will be used in this dissertation. An account of the origins of nationalism and its recent ascendency will be provided further below. For now, let it suffice that by "nation," is meant a community that exists in the social imaginary with a specifically ethnic and political character. The ethnic community "always seeks to embody itself in forms of political and cultural organization appropriate to its collective self-consciousness and even to assert its political identity and independence against foreign aggression."[479] The inextricability of these two dimensions (ethnic and political) is essential to understanding the nationalist phenomenon. Even multi-ethnic nations, like the United States, maintain an often implicit (and sometimes explicit) ethnic hierarchy, wherein some ethnicities or races are deemed "more American" than others.[480]

By "nationalism," I refer to a politico-cultural ideology that holds: (1) the nation is the ideal and proper source of political sovereignty; therefore states are best divided along national boundaries. And because of this (2) the preservation and elevation of national identity is to be considered essential for the protection of political life. The definition of "nation" itself is not self-evident, precisely because of its intrinsically intersectional nature. Nations exist in the social imaginary at the crossroads of race, language, and religion, among other identities. That is why the movements of national sovereignty and the protection and elevation of national identity often have strongly racial, linguistic, and/or religious dimensions.

In the first part of this chapter, with the guidance of Benedict Anderson, Carolyn Marvin, and David Ingle, I will work to offer a coherent and robust account of the significance of the "nation," both in its origins and in its ongoing political function. Anderson famously identified the nation as an "imagined community," imagined as sovereign. National distinctions are not given, but are constructed, and they maintain their power insofar as they hold a grip on our collective imagination. Marvin and Ingle highlight the mythic dimensions of the nation by offering a sustained analysis of American nationalism in particular, read against ancient practices of ritualized blood sacrifice. The nation is imagined as sovereign and sacred.

In the second part, I turn to a more direct analysis of the present political situation and seek to offer an explanation for the rise of the so-called new nationalism of the twenty-first century. Both in the United States, especially with Donald Trump, and around the world, the past decade has witnessed a resurgence in nationalist politics. However, according to many sociological experts, this should not take us by surprise. The nation, performing a symbolic, even sacred, function becomes more and more essential as society grows in its collective anxiety. Especially in a time of increased secularization, the nation offers the psychological comfort of transcendent meaning and a stable identity, both for the individual and the collective.

By means of this analysis, I intend to justify the identification of nationalism as central to our current political *kairos*. The nation is the "god of this age," and nationalism is the ideology that drives its worship. Nationalism is, I aim to show, essentially idolatrous and therefore in competition with the worship of the Holy Trinity. This exploration of the sources and function of nationalism in our time will serve as the socio-

analytic mediation, preparing for the political theological reflection on nationalism to be offered in the final chapter.

What is the Nation?

While many theorists may have been taken by surprise by the persistence of nationalism through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, Benedict Anderson was not. As far back as 1983 he wrote: "[T]he end of the era of nationalism, so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time."[481] During this time, both Soviet Communism and Western liberal democracy both appeared to militate against nationalism in their own ways. But, as Anderson understood, both actually had a fundamental reliance on the idea of nationhood for their existence. "[S]ince World War II every successful revolution has defined itself in *national* terms."[482] And that includes the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and others who, by virtue of their Marxist founding principles, perhaps, *ought* to have been able to break free of the nationalist paradigm. Even the Soviet Union, Anderson argues, was not any less nationalist for not representing a national identity in its name than was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

To the question, then, of *what is the nation*, Anderson's analysis remains unsurpassed: "the nation is an imagined community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[483] First, it is imagined because it is a product of the human mind, not merely an objective "given" state of affairs. And this despite the fact that nationalists themselves will tend to imagine that national identity is as "given" as one's date of birth

or sex.[484] It is imagined, as opposed to invented, because the latter term would indicate a sense of unreality. Just because the nation is *imagined* does not mean it is not *real*.

Second, the nation is imagined as "inherently limited," because despite the fact that national identity is always contestable, it nevertheless remains certain that there will always be those who fall outside the bounds of a given nation. This is opposed to other sorts of communities, particularly mission oriented religious communities that do indeed desire that every individual become, say, a Christian. Even at the height of imperialist expansion, no national group has ever had as its aim that everyone in the world be a member of their nation. Limits are intrinsic to the idea of national identity.

Third, the nation is imagined as "sovereign." The nation came of age, so to speak, in a time of great political upheaval. The universal authority of the Catholic Church in Western Europe had been radically questioned, and so too were the divinely appointed monarchies. The nation filled a vacuum and asserted itself as the fundamental, primordial locus of political sovereignty, over which popes and kings had authority only by the consent of the nation itself.

Fourth, and finally, the nation is imagined as a "community." Whether it *is* in fact a community is beside the point. But the *idea* of the nation is such that it draws together people of truly disparate origins (diverse religions, classes, genders, sometimes even races) into a community that has the appearances of being horizontal in nature. Only this communal nature can serve to explain how effective national identity has been in soliciting its citizens to both kill and die for the national cause.

But community alone does not exhaustively explain the power to command life and death that the nation apparently wields. There is something implicitly transcendent in

the idea of the nation, which expresses itself in essentially religious terms. As discussed in chapter three, religions, in the Tillichian sense, are usually concerned with ultimate meaning. And one such "religious" question that the nation addresses is individual eschatology.

Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle, show in great detail the precise mechanism of this transcendence of nationalism as a means of obtaining a kind of immortality.[485] Their focus is particularly on American nationalism and the use of violence to constantly renew and refresh the national identity, which is embodied in the flag—a sacred totem. Building on Émile Durkheim's notion of totemism, Marvin and Ingle analyze American national culture through the lens of a ritualized system of sacrifice. The nation is engaged in a literal ritual of blood-sacrifice as it offers its victims to its god, embodied in the flag, itself also an embodiment of fallen heroes. Military sacrifice is an unambiguous form of *apotheosis*. "The totem god of society, which turns out to be society itself, cannot do without it worshippers. . . . It must possess and consume, it must *eat* its worshippers to live."[486]

To cast nationalism in such explicitly religious terms may seem strange, but Benedict Anderson's analysis of the history of nationalism shows that the idea of the nation itself emerges directly out of a highly ritualized and religious context. The rise of secularism in eighteenth century Europe created a religious vacuum. The Christian myths that had held Western society and culture together were upended. And the Enlightenment rationalists did not have a replacement story. Society does not cohere on philosophies, but on stories, myths in which we are called to participate.

One hallmark feature of the pre-modern society was the dominance of universal (sacred) languages such as "Church Latin, Qur'anic Arabic, or Examination Chinese."[487] These languages cut across other possible social divides and vernaculars. Even for those who did not speak, much less read or write, these sacred languages, its mere existence was a kind of transcendent guarantor of truth. "In fact, the deader the written language – the farther it was from speech – the better: in principle everyone has access to a pure world of signs."[488] This also meant that the social boundary was somewhat permeable—open to the possibility of conversion—unlike ethnic boundaries, which are more or less fixed.

The demotion of the sacred language, spurred by the advent of print-capitalism, is a central cause in the fall of Christendom and the rise of nationalism. This is the core of Anderson's thesis. The newspaper especially, he claims, reoriented our understanding of time and our participation in it. Time, under the classical, pre-modern conception, was primarily understood in relationship to eternity. Eternity, classically defined as the simultaneously-whole and perfect possession of interminable life, is fixed and immutable. Thus "time" must be understood as circular, not in the sense of repetitive, per se, but in that all moments of time are equidistant to eternity. From God's vantage, which is, after all, the *true* vantage, all time (past, present, and future) are perceived simultaneously. Moments of time are therefore directly related to God in eternity and can be understood directly as instantiations of God's providence. Time is rich, textured, and intrinsically meaningful (i.e., the time of the Old Covenant is one of prefiguring, the time of the New Covenant is one of fulfillment), rather than rigidly measured with clocks and calendars.

In the modern world, especially thanks to the dissemination of the printed newspaper, the imagination of time was reconfigured. Moments of time became immediately related, not to an eternal fixed point, but to other points in time. Time itself came to be understood as "homogenous" and "empty," without any internal or intrinsic significance. "Temporal coincidence," replaces the notion of "prefiguring and fulfillment."[489] Now, in the imagination of an individual, with the help of his newspaper, one could conceive of two otherwise unrelated events now being brought together on the same page because they occurred at the "same time."

The print-languages thus became central to one's socio-cultural imagination. The print-languages occupied a middle space between Latin (universal, always written, not spoken) and the local vernaculars (particular, always spoken, not written). The materials made accessible through print-capitalism created a new communal identity because those who spoke many different variations of French, or English, or Spanish, who could not have easily shared spoken conversation, were now united by a broader (but still not universal) language. It was in this language that they learned about the "events" which were occurring "simultaneously" to "them." The print-languages also gave a fixity to language, which gave the illusion that this community that had actually just now come into existence *as* a community, had much deeper origins in the past.[490]

This illusory past and the non-elective nature of the national identity that thus emerged helped imbue nationality with a great deal of sacredness. The natural obligation that one might feel toward their own family and close relatives is now extended, mysteriously, to many others. And, like with family, because it is not chosen, those bonds are all the more powerful.[491]

But here is where Marvin and Ingle's thesis on blood sacrifice and the nation helps to supplement what Anderson has presented. It is not just the case that nationalism replaced Christendom as the locus of communal identity, but that it replaced Christianity as the dominant social myth, the religion, of Western Europe. Of course Christianity endured, but especially after the fracturing of Christian identity brought on by the Protestant Reformation there was a desperate cultural need for a different identity that could bring stability. And the proliferation of Christian denominations and fragmenting of Christian identities made religious orthodoxy totally unviable as a socio-cultural bedrock, as it had been for the past millennium. And thus, as if by accident, the national consciousness emerged and replaced the Church as the guarantor of social stability. And so, whether they knew it or not, these national identities had a sacerdotal duty to perform.

The role of sacrifice in humanity's relationship with God can be interpreted in various ways theologically, but sociologically it appears to serve this basic function: "myth without violence has no power," just as, "violence without myth has no order."[492] Violence essentially discriminates; it creates symbolic borders. And "[p]atriotism is a religion of the borders organized around a myth about the violence that begets them."[493] Like the Sinai Covenant, sealed with blood sprinkled on the people, renewed daily in the Temple; like the New Covenant, which Christ sealed in his own blood on the Cross, renewed daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; so also the mythic nation is founded on an act of sacrifice. Without this primordial sacrifice there would be no nation: nothing worth dying for, no borders to protect with one's life.

But not all violence and death is sacrifice. According to Marvin and Ingle: "The totem secret, the collective group taboo, is the knowledge that society depends on the

death of its own members *at the hands of the group*."[494] It is not that God so much desires the death of Isaac, but that he desires Abraham's willingness to sacrifice. The obvious instantiation of this in the nationalist setting is military violence: fathers send their sons to die for the nation.

Mythologically speaking, the fourth party at play, besides God, the priest, and the sacrificial offering, is the *satan*—the adversary. There is an enemy that we intend to kill, but the death of our own is what actually effects reconciliation and peace. "Though we set out to kill the scapegoat . . . only the savior's death makes the ritual work."[495] The sacrificial violence of the nation-state serves to confirm the identity of the group and to reassert its boundaries, as Girard's theory of the scapegoat mechanism describes. Marvin and Ingle explain that in order to preserve the "totem secret," we must justify our violence by means of an outside threat. There must be some cause for the hero to go outside of our borders to die, otherwise the secret would be totally unmasked. Thus unsanctioned violence from the outside, like Pearl Harbor or 9/11, serve as a powerful catalyst for our desire to re-order the violence through ritual. When members of the nation die chaotically and seemingly without purpose, we then seek to imbue significance to those deaths by creating more death, but on our terms—willingly rather than unwillingly.

As Marvin and Ingle describe the phenomenon of ritualized sacrifice, this one element stands out, namely that the victim must be willing. The case of the September 11 attacks is a fascinating example of the sacrificial mechanism at work. Of course all of the victims are mourned, and all victims spur on the nation to unfurl their flags in patriotic

display. It would seem that these victims, unwilling though they were, renewed and replenished the symbolic power of the American flag with their own blood.

We may even think more specifically of those, on that day, who *did* enter into death willingly. One such group, whose story attained almost the status of a myth, was the passengers of United 93 who overtook the cockpit and plunged the aircraft into a field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. They went from being mere victims to being heroes because they took death into their own hands. Similarly, the first responders, and primarily firefighters of the New York Fire Department, gave up their lives by rushing courageously into the burning towers. But all of this is prelude to the kind of violence that is "ritually successful."[496] That kind of violence, which must occur outside the border, possesses at least five characteristics.

First, "blood must touch every member of the group." In other words, the ritual effectiveness of the violence relies on as many citizens as possible being directly impacted by the bloodshed. Second, "the sacrificial victim must be willing," as we stated previously. Third, "victimage must be unanimous." This point, borrowed from Girard, means "war must be popular."[497] The sacrifice is offered in order to protect us against an external threat. If that threat does not seem truly dangerous, then people will find the sacrifice to be a needless exchange. (But keep in mind that, ritually speaking, in the collective unconscious, it is not "us" killing "them" that protects us, but the sacrifice of our own that is truly efficacious.) This leads naturally to the fourth point, that "at the launching of the undertaking there is genuine uncertainty about the fate of the group." In fact, the greater the existential threat, the more powerful the effect. Finally, then, "outcomes must be definite." In the end the conflict must have a definite conclusion, so

that we can see clearly its effects—the first of which is the reconstitution, or better, re-consecration, of our borders.

This may all seem like a great deal of needless mythicizing of otherwise mundane observations: wars must be popular, people want wars to be have just cause, people want wars to have definite ends. But the rationalization of the large-scale violence that is war ignores what William Cavanaugh so brilliantly identifies as the "myth of religious violence."[498] In his book, by the same name, he argues that the common argument that religion is uniquely violent or that religious violence is uniquely irrational is part of a great self-deception of the modern secular state. In other words, "our" violence, that is, violence committed on behalf of the secular state is measured, rational, and necessary; whereas "their" violence, committed in the name of "religion," is chaotic, irrational, and unnecessary. As I discussed in chapter three, there is no empirical distinction between religious and secular forms of violence. More to the point, there is no systematic or coherent way to distinguish between what is "religious" and what is not in the first place. The great narratives of faith, transcendent ideals, and sacred spaces, people, and objects, are a part of every culture and society no matter how "secular." And these sacred parts of culture are always deeply tied to violence. To put it in Marvin and Ingle's terms, someone like Cavanaugh is breaking taboo by telling the totem secret, exposing that the violence of the ostensibly secular nation-state is just as "sacred" and ritualistic as any Crusader, Jihadist, or Zealot.

According to Cavanaugh, the nation-state, both in its origin and in its ongoing acts of violence, performs a sacred function. And this because the emergence of the modern state itself was created as an alternative to the temporal power of the Church in

Europe. Martin Luther himself contributed to the creation of the state with his notion of the "two kingdoms," which replaced the medieval doctrine of the "two swords." Two swords meant temporal and spiritual power wielded under the universal headship of the Vicar of Christ. Two kingdoms, on the other hand, meant separate realms with separate jurisdictions: one over the body, one over the soul. With the proliferation of competing Christian communities, the Roman Church could no longer provide peace and stability in Europe, and a new locus of solidarity had to be found, and the policy of *cuius regio, eius religio* marked the victory of the secular over the ecclesial powers. But it did not mean the end of *sacred* power. On the contrary, the sacredness merely began a migration toward the nation-state, culminating in the totem cult of blood-sacrifice described by Marvin and Ingle.

We can thus conclude that nations are, both by their origin and function, deeply connected to communal identities of religion and language. And, as Henry Goldschmidt will further conclude, the category of race itself, along with language and religion, are co-constitutive of national identity. The emergence of the category of race must be read alongside the volatile colonial period in which the modern categories of religion and nation also came into existence. For instance, the exclusion of Irish, Italians, and Jews from "whiteness" was not about phenotype but that these are historically non-Protestant populations. The assimilation of Jews and Catholics into the United States was a difficult process, and so also was admission into the white identity. Both Jews and Catholics were thought to have suspicious loyalties vis-à-vis the predominantly white/Protestant culture in the United States.[499] Consider also the case of Bhagat Singh Thind who, in 1920 argued before the Supreme Court of the United States that because he was a "high caste

aryan," that he be considered "white" and thus eligible for US citizenship. (The decision against him was unanimous, citing a "common sense" definition of whiteness.[500])

As was stated at the outset, nations exist in the social imaginary at the crossroads of race, language, and religion, among other identities. States, on the other hand, are the mechanisms of political power and monopolies of coercion. Nationalism is therefore the doctrine that the nation is the ideal and proper source of political sovereignty. While nationalism is obviously the dominant and persistent political perspective on the world stage, there are still some exceptional cases that need to be addressed. First is the existence of multistate nations. A most notable example of this is the division of North and South Korea: one in "nation," yet sharply divided at the political level. There also can exist stateless nations, as for example, Palestine, whose statehood and independence is highly contested. Yet examples of multistate nations and stateless nations only serve to highlight the primacy of nationalist ideology. In the case of Korea, peace talks aim at reunification;[501] whereas for Israel and Palestine the most viable peace movement is predicated on the "two-state" solution. In both cases, the political imagination of all parties involved assumes the primacy of the nation-state.

A more complex and problematic example is multinational states, such as the United Kingdom, which is a political union arguably composed of four nations: England, Scotland, Wales, and (Northern) Ireland. Further complicating the situation is that one of the nations in the United Kingdom (a multinational state) is itself a multistate nation (The Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland). Given this situation, can Brexit properly be categorized as a nationalist movement? Is there such a thing as "British nationalism?"

First, Brexit need not be an expression of *British* nationalism. Many see Brexit as both arising from and leading toward an increased English nationalism. And some anticipate that the separation of the United Kingdom from the European Union may yield a further separation within the UK. Many already observe that English nationalism was the underlying power behind Brexit,[502] and so Brexit could precipitate a pro-Europe Scottish independence movement. Many in Scotland may be willing to depart from the United Kingdom if it meant maintaining stronger ties to the Continent.[503] So, despite these complexities, the case of the United Kingdom does not discount the persistence and even rise of nationalism in the twenty-first century. If anything, the Brexit movement and internal unrest are signs of the apparent inescapability of nationalist thinking. Together with the election of Donald Trump, most analysts see these two events as the primary examples of the new nationalism that has swept the world in the early part of this century.

The New Nationalism

The resurgence of nationalist movements in the 2010s (often seen as a backlash to globalization and neo-liberal policies) has been identified by political commentators as the "new nationalism," or, "neo-nationalism."[504] Whereas in previous decades there may have been more naïve optimism about the "end of history," the third millennium has witnessed an increase in the success of nationalist politicians on every continent. The causes for this recent phenomenon will be the question taken up in this section.

President Donald Trump

November 8, 2016, delivered a shock to the American political system. Statistician Nate Silver, had, on the morning of November 8, projected that Hilary Clinton had a 71.4% chance of winning the American presidency.[505] The New York Times projection was even steeper, putting Clinton's odds at 85%.[506] The upset-victory of Donald Trump, a brash celebrity without any political experience, against virtually all predictions, must be seen as a decisive political moment in the history of America. Its causes and effects will be the subject of analysis and debate for many years to come.

The surprise of Trump's election is a crucial element of the story, because it exposes the fact that the prevailing political common sense of the time was, in fact, wrong. The election of Trump is a call for a re-analysis of the political trajectory of this century. Trump may not be thought of as an expert in many things, but his ability to grab hold of the nation's attention and to dictate the terms of the conversation are a tremendous skill that he demonstrated brilliantly during his campaign and his time in office.

Trump is the first successful presidential campaign of the social media era.[507] During Obama's first campaign in 2008, social media was still in its infancy. Trump, however, fully utilized the now ubiquitous role of social media. As with most of what occurs on social media, Trump's tactics there were often very childish, but effective nonetheless.[508] His brash and bullying personality, far from isolating him from voters, actually solidified his base.

Dan P. McAdams, professor of human development and social policy, offers an insightful analysis of Trump's success from an evolutionary-psychological perspective.

While many primitive human hierarchies were grounded in traits such as, "skill in hunting and warfare, generosity and kindness, and freedom from bad temper," there is a more primal form of hierarchy to which Trump's style appeals. Chimpanzee politics are rooted in qualities such as:

> being large and being strong, though smaller dominant chimps can compensate through powerful vocal displays and other intimidating tactics. Alpha chimps regularly exhibit piloerection—their hair stands on end . . . which makes them appear even larger than they really are.[509]

These qualities of an alpha chimp are quite clearly exhibited in Trump's behavior. His overly aggressive handshakes have made headlines, as he asserts his dominance over others by jostling them around. He is a physically imposing man, at six-foot-three and two-hundred and forty pounds, yet tremendously sensitive to any insinuation against his size. And his intimidation tactics used in debates and on social media are a parallel to the "vocal displays" of the chimpanzees.

Trump operates in a "dominance" rather than a "prestige" hierarchy, as McAdams describes it. The former is built on raw power and intimidation; the latter is fostered through good will. Those who climb dominance hierarchies tend to think of their own qualities in "essentialist" terms: "An essentialist mind-set suggests that people have essential and unchanging characteristics—I am smart or I am dumb, for example, and my standing on that dimension (let us call it intelligence) is not going to change."[510] Trump constantly touts his own intelligence. He tweets: "my two greatest assets have been mental stability and being, like, really smart,"[511] and, "I think that would qualify as not smart, but genius....and a very stable genius at that!"[512] But most importantly, he treats

his intelligence as an essential and intrinsic quality that he possesses because of his "genes."[513]

> Research also shows that the combination of high extraversion and low agreeableness is correlated with a particular cluster of values and beliefs that comprise what social psychologists call social dominance orientation (SDO). Individuals with high scores on SDO tend to believe that their own group (e.g., race, ethnicity, nation, religion) is innately superior to all other groups and will, therefore, prevail in the end.[514]

Thus Trump's overt narcissistic personality, rather than repelling voters, attracts them, because they are being welcomed to participate in the collective narcissism of nationalist pride. When Trump blusters on about how no one is greater than he is, there is a sense in which the American voter participates vicariously in Trump's greatness. Middle and low-income voters do not "resent [Trump's] enormous wealth and over-the-top conspicuous consumption," because, "as a symbol of the nation, what better way to signal strength and superiority than through conspicuous symbols of economic success?"[515] The slogan of "Make America Great Again," is an invitation to "win."[516]

What we see at play, therefore, in the rise to prominence of Donald Trump can be properly described as a collective narcissism. It has been demonstrated that there is a correlation between individual and collective narcissism, "because the self-concept consists of personal self and social identities based on the groups to which people belong." This collective narcissism will manifest itself in collective forms of aggression against other groups, because "[c]ollective narcissists may see groups as extensions of themselves and expect everybody to recognize not only their individual greatness but also the prominence of their in-groups."[517] A second indicator of collective narcissism is a

hypersensitivity to in-group insults, resulting in collective expressions of *shadenfreude* and other forms of intergroup hostility.[518]

The pre-eminent researcher on the phenomenon of collective narcissism, Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, showed in her analysis of 2016 polling data that this specifically nationalist collective narcissism was a strong predictor of voting patterns in the 2016 US presidential election.[519] And this comes as no surprise. The us-versus-them mentality was front and center in Trump's campaign, especially in the most prominent element of his platform: building the border wall (and, as Trump was always quick to add, making Mexico pay for it). Similarly, then-candidate Trump called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on."[520] These campaign promises, and subsequent policy decisions, are premised on not only extreme veneration of the nation, but a corresponding rejection of those outside it. And these promises, when they are fulfilled, are highly symbolic and performative, as will be discussed below in a further discussion of the psychological function of border walls.

Donald Trump's victory in 2016 can be reasonably attributed to his ability to tap into an already existing current of national self-interest, even to the point of manifesting collective narcissism. And while Trump was uniquely able to capitalize on these feelings, he is merely articulating what has been and will continue to be typical of American politics. For example, then-Senators Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama voted in favor of the 2006 "Secure Fence Act," which called for 700 miles of fencing along the southern border. Of this bill, Obama said: "The bill before us will certainly do some good. It will authorize some badly needed funding for better fences and better security along our

borders, and that should help stem some of the tide of illegal immigration in this country."[521] And there was a skyrocketing of deportations and expansion in border security measures during the Obama administration.[522] In fact, during Trump's first years in office, migrant apprehensions and deportations were actually down from the levels under President Obama.[523]

One must recognize that nationalism is not an exclusively right-wing phenomenon. For one, out of practical necessity, all politicians must acquiesce to the reality of the sovereignty of the nation-state, not to mention the hold on the imagination of the electorate that the idea of the nation still holds. Secondly, however, even for today's progressives (the Democratic Party, the Labour Party, etc.) the only proposed model of socialism is the nationalization of industry. Truly internationalist workers movements seem virtually non-existent. And to the extent that they do exist, their invisibility in the public discourse is enough to demonstrate the impotence of the movement at present.

The New Nationalism Outside the United States

In the United Kingdom, just five months prior to the Trump election, a majority of voters, at the June 23 referendum, declared their desire to leave the European Union. This likewise caused a stir in the entire UK political system—prompting the resignation of David Cameron, as well as having an immediate economic impact. The withdrawal was postponed from March 2017 but was finally ratified in January 2020, marking the beginning of a one-year process of transition out of the EU.

The movement matches a trend of "Euroscepticism" that has been steadily growing over the past several decades. According to the British Social Attitudes survey, the so-called Eurosceptic position, which would favor either the diminishment or elimination of EU influence on Britain, was at 38% in 1993, but has steadily held at between 60% and 70% during the years 2012 through 2015.[524] And, again, it should be noted that the Brexit movement was not entirely rightwing. There was a definable movement of leftwing support for Brexit, even with its own moniker: *Lexit*.[525] Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the British Labour Party, has stated that with Labour in power, Brexit would have gone ahead as intended.[526] This is still more evidence that mainstream progressive and socialist movements are firmly rooted in the nationalist paradigm.

In France, frustrated working class voters have given a strong presence to the National Front, a virulently anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic party, that (much like Trump's campaign) "pits the people against a corrupt elite, symbolizing a desire to reclaim national sovereignty from international institutions."[527]

This century has also seen a resurgence of nationalism in Russia, one that especially emphasizes ethnic loyalties. "Previously dominated by 'imperial' tendencies – pride in a large, strong and multi-ethnic state able to project its influence abroad – Russian nationalism is now focusing more and more on ethnic issues."[528] Around 2010, anti-immigrant feelings in Russia were at a high, and many blamed Vladimir Putin for subsidizing this migration. What followed was Putin's return to more overtly nationalistic measures that once again bolstered his popularity. In his 2012 campaign, Putin "focus[ed] on the historical role – indeed, 'the mission' – of the ethnically Russian people. At the

same time, Putin's model retained the state-centered orientation that had characterised Russian nationalism before 'the ethnic turn' of recent years."[529]

Very noticeably, President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, since assuming office in 2012 has been leading China towards a Confucian renaissance. Where Mao Zedong had attempted to ban Confucian writings and convert temples into libraries or museums, Xi now embraces these Chinese traditions in what is referred to as the "rejuvenation." President Xi, in a 2014 address stated: "Confucianism is the key to understanding the national characteristics of the Chinese as well as the historical roots of the spiritual world of the present-day Chinese."[530] Experts have noted that the response to the Hong Kong protests of 2019 by the Chinese government have taken a specifically ethno-nationalist tone.[531] The chronic mistreatment of Uighurs and Tibetans, not just by the official state apparatus, but by indoctrinated, nationalist mainlanders, is already extending to Hong Kongers—more subtle than a second Tiananmen, but nevertheless extraordinarily violent.[532]

Such examples could indeed be multiplied almost endlessly. On every continent, and in widely diverse political and social contexts, the centrality of the nation in political discourse is clearly in a time of resurgence. The question this poses is, of course, why nationalism now? After the apparent global victory of liberal democracy, and the 'end of history,' in the late twentieth century, what is to account for the forceful return of the nation in the last decade or so? Only once we have answered this socio-cultural question will the material object of socio-analytic mediation be prepared for political theological inquiry to be taken up in the next and final chapter. In other words, having established

that this 'new nationalism' is the political *kairos* of our present, we must explore its ideological roots in order to prepare for a political theological analysis.

Why Nationalism Now?

"The reemergence of nationalism has taken the world by surprise. This was supposed to be a liberal and democratic century," writes Yael Tamir, in her 2019 liberal apology for nationalism. "The present political upheaval is a necessary wake-up call."[533] The lesson liberals need to learn, she argues, is that liberalism—like any political ideology—is not self-sufficient and requires nationalism (or at least something like nationalism) for the creation of "a pre-political partnership that turns citizens into a collective entity."[534] And what is it about nationalism that allows it to function so well in this way? Because it has a power to call us to "blood, toil, tears, and sweat."[535]

Especially because of its emphasis on shared language, nationalism worked for the creation of cross-class coalitions.

> Sharing a language reduced training costs, encouraged people to move from one part of the country to another, and enabled social and economic change. The homogenization of culture and language served both the economic need for professional adaptability and the democratic demand for shared deliberations.[536]

Participation in the nation itself came to be a point of pride, and even status, for those without either education or wealth. The greatest offering of the nation to the citizen, she claims, was dignity. Even when the nation failed to deliver on its promises of health, wealth, and education, "there is a world of difference between not receiving a service and not being able to claim it."[537] But is there?

Here Tamir takes direct aim at the Marxists who see nationalism as an obfuscation of class conflict and thus a direct impediment to class-consciousness. The Marxist critics "failed to see that even those economically exploited acquired new political powers and social benefits. … The nation-state offered them gains far more valuable than an international class struggle could have ever granted."[538] Despite this being an unsubstantiated assertion, her own line of thinking refutes itself. In the very next chapter, as she traces the expansion of markets into the globalized economy she describes it this way:

> The allocation of social and political status on the basis of mere membership that was typical of the national way of thinking gave way to a neoliberal understanding of status grounded in skills and performance. Never had competence been so intensively pursued; those who have the required skills are offered unlimited opportunities, those who don't are left behind. The skills and competencies required for mobility and adaptation are no longer grounded in any particular national feature. National cultures, and especially national languages, are of little use to members of the mobile classes (and may even be an obstacle).[539]

In essence, she is acknowledging that the relatively benign relation between labor and capital was only able to sustain itself so long as capital was also relatively fixed within national borders. In a totally closed economy, national workers movements *would* be sufficient to chasten the effects of the market. But the transnational power of capital demands transnational modes of resistance.

Tamir is entirely correct to note that the reemergence of nationalism is in direct response to the power of economic globalization. When a factory closes in Detroit and is moved to Dhaka, the natural political response would not involve any solidarity or cooperation with Bangladeshi workers. Rather, the impulse is to compete against them

(accepting lower wages, perhaps) or voting in any public official who promises to put "America first." Even Bernie Sanders' so-called socialism is a program of outright economic nationalism.[540] For liberals like Tamir, who have foreclosed the Marxist critique of political economy, the only solution in the face of the woes of the global economy is a revival of nationalism. We must embrace "the nationalism of mutual responsibility that places fellow nationals at the top of one's social priorities."[541]

Tamir's perspective helpfully allows us to identify the anxiety that would drive even a progressive like herself to champion "nation first," ideology, namely globalization, especially economic globalization. Wendy Brown names four specific causes of this nationalist anxiety: First, "transnational flows of capital, people, ideas, goods, violence, and political and religious fealty." These forces not only relativize physical borders, but are seen as a threat to the symbolic borders of national identity, which is itself tied to political sovereignty. Second, she calls "neoliberal rationality," that is to say, an ideology that gives priority to market forces above all else. Third, the increased power of trans- and international economic bodies like the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. Finally, the ascendency of international legal and quasi-legal institutions like the European Union or United Nations. All of these contribute to the erosion, both real and perceived, of national sovereignty.[542]

Sovereignty, Brown contends, has been migrating away from nation-states and toward economic and religious powers. The rise of religious extremism that she observes has already been accounted for by what Marvin and Ingle refer to as the rise of affiliative groups that rival the totem, when the totem loses its power. Some of these religious groups seek to topple the powers that be (like Islamic extremism in Western nations).

Others aim to prop it up, such as many Evangelical Christians in the United States. The fact that a perceived weakening of national power can correspond to a rise in religious fervor (both for and against the nation) is just further evidence that the nation is, in itself, an embodiment of something sacred.

"When the totem lacks strength or will to enforce its borders, affiliative competitors strive for ascendance."[543] In other words, a clear sign that the sacred collective identity needs refreshing and the borders need reconsecrating is the rise of factionalism and tribalism. Among these different groups there will be those who are rivals to the totem (but still operating clearly within its frame), and others will see themselves as the totem's defender. And this is perhaps the simplest explanation of the politics of the Left and Right in the United States today. Trump and the "Make America Great Again," crowd are clearly trying to "refresh" the borders, and reassert the dominance of the totem (i.e., "America First.").

Meanwhile, liberals are embracing an ever-increasingly radical form of identity politics in which various identity markers (age, race, religion, ethnicity, sex, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and so on) become central to one's political identity. Marvin and Ingle explicitly identify the LGBT community as one such affiliative group that is simultaneously creating a rivalry with the national totem as well as seeking legitimacy within it. It is no surprise then that these issues are front and center in the national discourse. The LGBT political movement is deeply intertwined with questions of national identity.

The modern movement of gay liberation has its own founding mythology rooted in sacrificial violence, namely the Stonewall riot of 1969. And the subsequent AIDS

epidemic of the 1980s also, through death, helped cohere and solidify a communal identity and solidarity. But in order to be truly integrated, they must be allowed to be participants in the sacred violence of the nation-state. In 2011, gays and lesbians were allowed to serve openly in the military—meaning that, for the first time, when they *were* sacrificial victims of war, their death could now be attributed to their particular group identity, which previously had to remain secret.[544] Conversely, as of 2019, transgender individuals will be prevented from enlisting in the military.[545] These events mark an ongoing struggle for the integration of the LGBT community within the totem cult.

There is also a trend within the LGBT movement, not for integration but rivalry towards the dominant narrative. Especially as Marvin and Ingle point to the rich symbolic power of flags, one cannot help but notice the proliferation of the rainbow Pride flag. During the month of June, Pride month, virtually every major corporation in the United States incorporates the Pride flag into their marketing in some way.[546] Of course this should be read as a cynical marketing ploy. But the deeper question is *why* is it such a popular marketing campaign, considering only 4.5% of Americans actually identify as LGBT.[547] The reality is that the LGBT movement has effectively rallied a huge portion of the population into a virtual community with deep symbolic power. The Pride flag is to many a powerful symbol of universal love and freedom. In a time when the United States flag is seen by many (on the Left) as inherently divisive, even racist, the Pride flag is serving to more effectively create group solidarity.[548]

This leads us back to Brown's second "rival" sovereign to the nation-state, besides religious (or other affiliative) groups, there is the global power of capital that undermines national sovereignty. One of the reasons why political conservatism and

economic liberalism are often allied with nationalism is because of what Margaret Somers describes as a split between the state and the nation, where the "populace is allied exclusively with either the nation or the state—but not both."[549] Somers' thesis, similar to Brown's, is that there is a mounting tension "between global networks and local nationalisms . . . between national interests and the global market, hence between the nation and the state."[550] The state is the embodiment of material power. And while it ostensibly operates on behalf of the nation, it has in fact become a subservient instrument of capital (through corporate subsidies, generous tax codes, mandated consumption, etc.). The material power of the state and the symbolic power of the nation are thus opposed. And here is the genius of Somers' insight: the symbolic power of participation in the nation is given to citizens as a form of compensation for the fact that virtually all material (political or economic) power has been taken away from them.[551] The nationalist pride that comes from being a member of this exceptional community is a kind of consolation for the lack of material benefits awarded from being a citizen.

This explains the paradox of the anti-government patriot that is so common in American politics. How can it be that those most likely to proudly wave an American flag, those most offended by protesters kneeling during the national anthem, will also be the most suspicious and critical of the United States government? The Southern Poverty Law Center itself recognizes that right wing, anti-government agitators often self-identify as "Patriot" groups.[552] And this is because of a rift between the nation and the state, and these "patriots" identify with one in opposition to the other. They are the recipients of an exchange. In exchange for their surrender of material, political, or economic power, they are granted the inclusion into the exceptional status of being a true American.

This further accounts for why cultural conservatism is often paired with free market ideology. If national identity is not preserved, in all of its latent racial, religious, and linguistic dimensions, then the value of participation in the nation is cheapened for being too inclusive. For example, in the mind of a radical "patriot," non-white, non-Christian, and non-English speaking immigrants dilute the purity of American identity. If Muslims or Mexicans are allowed to be "fellow Americans," and especially if they are allowed to participate in whatever material benefits the patriot does receive as an American citizen, then the value of that citizenship is cheapened, and it thus no longer serves as adequate compensation for what is otherwise effective statelessness.

This is why Brown can conclude that the nation-state, waning as it is in material sovereignty, is doing whatever it can to prop up its symbolic power. One of the most visible displays of this "theater" is the construction of border walls. The two examples she gives of modern "walls" are the Israeli West Bank barrier and the US – Mexico border barrier, which began in 1990 under President George H. W. Bush.

Regarding the West Bank "wall," Brown observes how obviously related its construction is to notions of Schmittian sovereignty. For Schmitt, true sovereignty is exceptional: "Sovereign is he who decides the exception." Sovereignty is found not primarily in the enforcement of laws, but in the "legal" suspension of the law. And the Israeli wall is an example of just such a suspension. The justification for its existence is held to be a "temporary state of emergency." It is, "officially declared removable and rerouteable as the security situation requires or as political solution permits."[553] The combination of an ostensibly temporary situation being met by a seemingly permanent solution creates a state of permanent emergency, an ongoing period of suspension.[554] The

wall remains constantly cycling through periods of construction and stasis, and many times the proposed path is redirected, demonstrating the ongoing and almost *ad hoc* nature of its construction.

The US–Mexico border wall is in some ways different and in others quite the same. Since 1990, beginning at the border between San Diego and Tijuana, various forms of border protection have been implemented. Under President Clinton, in the mid-90s, the project continued to grow. In the period of the "War on Terror," following the September 11 attacks, George W. Bush signed into law the *Real ID Act* (2005), which granted the government the ability to supersede laws that interfered with the construction of border barriers. Here again we see a notion of exceptional sovereignty. Brown identifies at least thirty-six times in which the Real ID Act has been invoked to overturn existing laws for the sake of border wall creation. These include: "statutes concerned with water and air pollution, endangered species protection, animal migration, historic preservation, farmland protection, and Native American sacred lands provisions."[555] Once again, as in the Israeli–Palestinian case, the United States has invoked a state of exception. Normal law is suspended for the sake of protecting the border.

The crucial component of Brown's thesis, and mine by extension, is that the real purpose of these walls is something other than their stated function. To again return to the language of Marvin and Ingle, one could say that the "borders must be refreshed," or "reconsecrated," because the power of the totem is under attack. The power behind the wall is primarily symbolic rather than material. To this end, Brown discusses the actual inefficiency of the barriers to carry out their stated goals.

As evidence of the wall's "theatricality," she cites a 2009 study that showed that following the 2008 recession, "the net outflow of migration rates from Mexico—those who left minus those who returned—fell by about half in the year that ended in August 2008 from the preceding year." The most powerful force in immigration is the economic incentive. As the researcher stated: "If jobs are available, people come. If jobs are not available, people don't come."[556]

Secondly, Brown highlights the paradoxical outcomes of border fencing, which is often to redirect immigrants toward areas more dangerous for the immigrants, and in some cases more difficult for Border Patrol agents.[557] Deaths related to illegal border crossings have increased by as much as five times over the last decade since the expanded border enforcement. Additionally, the DEA reports that "the bulk" of illegal drugs coming into the country through the southern border come by way of official ports of entry.[558]

There's also the issue of creating one-way immigration patterns, wherein the host country actually increases in total number of migrants. Those who would otherwise have been temporary migrants become permanent. And the means by which borders are crossed become more complex, more dangerous, and the process thus becomes more reliant on overtly criminal enterprises. Armed and dangerous smugglers lead to a more deadly and hostile situation at the border.

If walls are not primarily effective in accomplishing their stated goal, then, Brown hypothesizes, they are popular because they bring psychological fulfillment to an unstated goal. She appeals to the works of Sigmund and Anna Freud to discuss basic psychological defense mechanisms born out of anxiety, and applies them to the social

consciousness of the nation.[559] As self-identity is protected, and even produced, dialectically, the nation must reassert itself in opposition to its Other.

I might also add that the Wall thus becomes a kind of religious icon. Our faith in the invisible (God, grace, etc.) is mediated to us by the visible (sacraments, icons, sacramentals, etc.). Recalling that nation and state are not identical, and in some ways in competition, we can see how the desires of the same person as both citizen (vis-à-vis the state) and as patriot (vis-à-vis the nation) can be divergent. The state, as raw material power, constantly has visible signs of embodiment: legislative bodies, police power, and so on. The nation seeks similar modes of realization, where "faith" can become "sight." A border wall satisfies this desire by giving visible embodiment to the desire for a secure and sovereign nation.

Conclusion

The raw power of states does not hold people together, because states don't generate of themselves the faith necessary for states to operate. There must be a buy-in. There must be a civic religion, or some equivalent thereof, that stirs up within the citizen a sense of duty and obligation. This is what even somewhat reluctant, liberal supporters of nationalism like Yael Tamir or Craig Calhoun acknowledge about nationalism: It is inevitable, at least for right now. For Calhoun, for instance, the enthusiastic turn toward globalization in the 1990s, in its effort to be universal, was often highly individualistic.[560] The good of nationalism, as he sees it, is to keep us grounded in community and tradition.[561] The basic claim by such theorists as Tamir and Calhoun is that there is no

other transnational community that is sufficient to generate an authentic "culture" that will support the kind of collective responsibility that human societies require.

We cannot forget, however, the obvious disadvantages that a nationalist mindset puts us in. Take global climate change as a primary example. There is no international body with the actual authority to enforce impactful climate measures. The model adopted in the Paris Agreement in 2016 is one of "nationally determined contributions." In other words, it is the sole responsibility of each nation to not only enforce, but even to develop goals and policies related to climate change. There were 153 nations that entered the agreement, 147 of them submitted pledges. And despite the fact that these 147 nations freely determined their own goals, all of them have fallen behind and failed to implement the necessary changes to achieve those goals.[562] Of course the United States, under the leadership of President Trump, has announced the intention to formally withdraw from the agreement in November 2020, further showing the toothlessness of the Agreement.[563]

Transnational capital is and will remain the sole global force of power until such time as other transnational forms of solidarity are allowed to emerge. Despite the fact that the global movement of capital undermines national sovereignty, it remains in the best interest of global capital to support the reinforcement of nationalist ideologies. The hypermobility of capital and the relative immobility of labor are highly advantageous to maintaining low-wage, high-efficiency working conditions. And, of course, one of the most profitable industries in the world relies *directly* on nationalism, namely, the military-industrial complex. Global capital has every incentive to encourage military expeditions into various parts of the developing world.

The nationalist apologists are shortsighted in advocating for nationalism on the basis of the evils of globalization. The problems of globalization are in large part direct results of nationalism, which hinders other forms of global solidarity. And without such solidarities, we will be unable to confront issues like climate change and the brutal power of global capital. This reading of the contemporary political situation, our present day *kairos*, clears the way for a political theological critique that is well informed.

I hope to have demonstrated in this chapter why nationalism is the definitive political issue of our time, under which all the great crises of this century can be categorized: war, immigration, climate change, etc. But it is also a matter of particular theological import because of the way in which, as we have seen, the nation functions in an essentially religious fashion. The nation is, functionally speaking, a god and nationalism is the ideology that seeks to supervise and enforce its worship. The nation and the Blessed Trinity are two images of God, two competing and alternate ways of conceptualizing the "highest good." Therefore to articulate the political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity, in the twenty-first century, must include a juxtaposition with the worship of the nation that seems to dominate the globe in our time.

With the work of hermeneutic mediation (chapter four) and socio-analytic mediation (chapter five) complete, we are ready to move to the sixth and final chapter, addressing the question of the potential political theological significance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICS IN LIGHT OF THE TRIUNE GOD

Introduction

Chapter one began with this question: What is the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and political theology? All of the previous chapters have been in the service of answering that question. Finally, then, in this sixth chapter, with all of the above information now collected, we are in a position to make an answer.

In the first two chapters I addressed various answers already given to the question. One possible answer is that the doctrine of the Trinity is a theological antecedent for secular, political notions of vicarious power and an economy of glory, or a metaphysical grounding for the fundamentally oppositional nature of politics and identity. These possible answers are offered by Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben as they follow a particular political theological method of understanding a relationship of correspondence or analogy between political and theological concepts, such that the two are mutually informative, even constitutive.

Alternatively, one may understand theology as having a more directly causal relationship on political theory and praxis. In that case, various theologians, such as Jürgen Moltmann, Leonardo Boff, and many others have understood trinitarian theology as a political model. Just as God is a community of co-equal persons, so we too, as a society, should work towards imitating God in our interpersonal egalitarianism.

But something fundamental is missing from both of these proposals, not just in their specifics, but even in the general method that they employ. On one hand, they are

insufficiently theological. Both of the above methods suppose that in order for a theological notion to be "politicized" it must first be transformed in some way. Schmitt will speak of secularization, while the new political theologians will intentionally cast off the traditional and orthodox formulas for the sake of rewriting a new, more "relevant," and politically agreeable version of a given doctrine. But this will not do. For in neither case is the traditional doctrine being dealt with on its own terms. On the other hand, these are insufficiently political, especially the new political theologians, insofar as they often forego critical social analysis.

Thus, I proposed that an adequate answer to this dissertation's central question would do well to follow the methodological parameters laid out by Clodovis Boff. Political theology that is worthy of its name must engage in what Boff refers to as hermeneutic and socio-analytic mediations. In other words, both the theological and political data must be adequately and independently prepared for the work of political theology. We can neither rush to conform the theological data to our political preferences, nor can we read the socio-political situations only as theologians. Both theological and socio-political analysis must be conducted with consummate integrity. And finally, then, in the work of political theology, the theological concepts serve as a formal object to work upon the material object of social analysis. The theological lens must remain primary.

The first step, for a *political* doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, is to understand the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity *per se*. Thus, I offered a thorough defense of the psychological analogy for the Trinity, which from Scripture, through the Fathers, St. Thomas Aquinas, even up to the work of Bernard Lonergan and his students, has served

as the primary model for understanding the classical understanding of God as Trinity. Further, I argued, especially following Lonergan's approach, that the doctrine of the Trinity is no mere doctrine, or dogma. Rather, the affirmation that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is a microcosm of the whole of the Christian proclamation.

The second step is to consider the social and political landscape of contemporary society. There I determined that, not only in the West, but also across the world, the rise of a new nationalism in this early part of the twenty-first century is the dominant political story of our time. Even the concerns related to climate change must be understood as subordinate to the resurgence of nationalism, because any attempts to respond to such a crisis will require solidarities that the nationalist paradigm have proven inadequate to provide.

Thus, in light of the doctrine of the Trinity, and in light of the new nationalism, what can the political theologian say? One theologian in particular, I believe, gives crucial insight into both of these questions. Erik Peterson, writing as a German theologian through the rise of National Socialism, specifically takes up the doctrine of the Trinity to "deal a blow to the *Reichstheologie*."[564] How he connects the doctrine of the Trinity to political theology is fundamentally unlike any proposal that has been considered thus far. So, I will begin by tracing the basic outline of Peterson's argument in his essay, "Monotheism as Political Problem."

Erik Peterson's Thesis

Erik Peterson, in his prefatory note to *Monotheism as a Political Problem* offers this small gem: "For Christians, political involvement can never take place except under

the presumption of faith in the triune God."[565] The meaning of such a declaration is not immediately clear. And even given the larger context of the essay as a whole, what Peterson might have in mind is never stated explicitly. However, in light of the preceding study, I believe we are now in a position to offer a potential meaning to this dictum and to define, however obliquely, what "political involvement" might look like "under the presumption of faith in the triune God."

As the Schmittian thesis on political theology asserts, there is a definite correlation between the metaphysics and politics of any given era. Peterson traces a brief survey of such a history. For example, Aristotle, in contrast to the metaphysical pluralism of Speusippus, or even to the dualism of Plato, asserts unity as a fundamental metaphysical principle. And as an illumination of this claim, Aristotle refers to the Iliad: "Beings do not want to be governed badly: 'the rule of many is not good, let one be ruler.'"[566] It is not that Aristotle is arguing from the basis of metaphysical monarchy to political monarchy, or vice versa, but rather that the two are mutually informative. He takes congruence between these two truths as a sure sign of clear thinking.

The Unmoved Mover of Aristotle "is a puppeteer who evokes the entire diversity of the world's motions just by pulling on a single string." Contrast this with the Platonic demiurge and clear political implications emerge. Is the political ruler more like a demiurge, himself derivative, secondary, and non-absolute? Or is the ruler more like the Aristotelian God who is the bearer of all authority, present everywhere, if not in person then at least in power? The latter account wins the day, both philosophically and politically, and so, like the kings who govern in and through their various delegates, the God of Aristotle governs the world in and through secondary powers.[567]

The question then emerges: should these secondary powers be considered gods also in their own right? In which case, are we truly dealing here with monotheism or with polytheism? The divine monarchy of Zeus stands in stark contrast to the strict monotheism of later Judaism. Zeus, while not the only deity, nevertheless, in his coming to power brings order to the chaos. His dominance, his monarchy, is good not because he abolishes all other gods or powers or authorities, but because he brings them into order. Likewise, the Roman ascendency was not one of total homogenization. Rather a plurality was now allowed to exist because it was contained and ordered by the dominant power.[568]

Contrast this view with that of Hellenistic Judaism. Such a pluralistic arrangement would not be in keeping with Jewish theology, which asserts the existence of one God, and one covenant people. Philo, for example, could never have accepted the notion that the God of Israel was in any way relativized by any other powers. "[T]he *one* God is not just the monarch of Israel but also of the cosmos."[569] Unlike with Zeus, there can be no happy arrangement between the worship of the God of Israel and the worship of any other god. The God of Israel is a jealous god. Moreover, all other so-called gods, to whatever extent they may exist, are to be considered demonic in nature. The one God has therefore entered into a covenant with one people, Israel, who are appointed to serve as priestly mediators for the whole creation, offering praise and sacrifice to God, on behalf of the entire created order.

While Peterson himself does not delve much into the question, a brief look at the history of the monarchy in the Jewish Scriptures is quite illuminating. When the question of Israel's political monarchy first emerges, it is represented as an institution

representative of compromise with the pagan cultures. God desired to act *directly* as the king of Israel. So, when they adopt a human king it is presented as an affront to God, and in some ways, a usurping of his sovereignty. However, as the narrative unfolds, king David emerges as a great archetypal figure. He and his lineage become the subject of great devotion as God promises to bless David and his offspring forever. While there remains a prophetic critique of power—both priestly and kingly—the seeming contradiction between earthly political power, per se, and divine monarchy, clearly subsides. Thus from the Maccabees through Zealot revolutionaries under Rome, the desire for political independence and a reconstitution of political sovereignty remained strong. One God, one people; one people, one king.

In the context of Jewish monotheism and against the backdrop of a broader culture of pagan polytheism, Christian theology emerged. And as the burgeoning question of the Trinity begins to take shape, its political consequences and corollaries are not unfelt. In fact, "We hold to the Monarchy," appears, from Tertullian's *Against Praxeas*, to have been a kind of rallying cry for those who sought to hold fast to strict monotheism in the face of the Logos-theology of the proto-Trinitarians.[570] Does the claim of Christ's divinity take Christian theology outside of the bounds of monotheism? Or is it the equivalent of a polytheistic compromise, where Christ is a lesser divinity, himself subservient to God the Father, just as the gods are dominated by Zeus?

Rome, under pagan authority, was highly suspicious of Christian monotheism, as it would preclude Christians from fitting into the somewhat pluralistic compromise that the Empire had established. One could worship or pray to whomever one wanted, as long

as he or she gave due veneration to the imperial cult; the imperial cult, of course, being necessary for social cohesion.

Origen's *Contra Celsum* is especially illuminating here. Consider the fact that the opening argument of Celsus against the Christians regards their politically subversive nature: they meet in secret to promote lawlessness. And Origen's response is remarkable in its courage:

> It is not irrational, then, to form associations in opposition to existing laws, if done for the sake of the truth. For as those persons would do well who should enter into a secret association in order to put to death a tyrant who had seized upon the liberties of a state, so Christians also, when tyrannized over by him who is called the devil, and by falsehood, form leagues contrary to the laws of the devil, against his power, and for the safety of those others whom they may succeed in persuading to revolt from a government which is, as it were, Scythian, and despotic.[571]

The immediately subsequent critique of Christianity leveled by Celsus is to associate it with Judaism, which he considers barbarous and primitive. Celsus is tolerant of Jewish worship, and even encouraging of these "ancestral customs," and hopes to see them preserved in perpetuity. Yet he makes this claim only in the context of his belief that every people, and every land, is governed by some superintending spirit that has been assigned to them. Judaism is praiseworthy, in Celsus' mind, as long as it is understood as merely being the celebration of a local, ancestral cult.[572] Such a theological compromise would allow a people to maintain their own traditions while still abiding comfortably and peaceably alongside other nations.

What Celsus finds condemnable are, "those persons rather who have forsaken their own usages, and adopted those of the Jews. And if they pride themselves on it, as being possessed of superior wisdom, and keep aloof from intercourse with others, as not

being equally pure with themselves."[573] Whether this is a reference to Gentile converts to Judaism, or Christians, as inheritors of Jewish thought, is not entirely clear. What is clear is that Celsus' objections are centered on transnational proselytism and the exclusivity, or pride, that is associated with such a radical monotheism. The Christians, therefore, in his mind, are guilty of such an offense against the common good.

Finally, Celsus appeals to Christianity's own practice in order to persuade them away from their radical and subversive monotheism: "If these people worshipped one God alone, and no other, they would perhaps have some valid argument against the worship of others. But they pay excessive reverence to one who has but lately appeared among men, and they think it no offense against God if they worship also His servant."[574] Implicitly, Celsus would prefer that the Christians resolve this contradiction by simply accepting Christ as a *personal* lord and savior. Such a cult could be tolerated, so long as it does not impinge, in the public forum, on the borders and boundaries of other local and ancestral cults.

So we see from the beginning that the questions of theology and Christology, as they would later develop into the Christological and Trinitarian controversies, immediately carried tremendous political implications. And the full divinity of Jesus was a radical claim because it made it impossible to regard him as merely a local prophet, guru, or saint. As Origen himself replies: "If Celsus had known that saying, I and My Father are one, and the words used in prayer by the Son of God, As You and I are one, he would not have supposed that we worship any other besides Him who is the Supreme God."[575]

Had Christianity accepted Christ as a mere creature, or even a lower or lesser divinity, then the door would have been left open for the pluralistic compromise to which Celsus aspired. Instead, by the insistence on the unity of the Father and the Son as the one Supreme God, there could be no other arrangement.

However, after the conversion of Constantine and the subsequent Christianizing of the Empire, the political situation changed dramatically and so the nature of these theo-political questions evolved as well. Origen had already made the argument in *Contra Celsum*, the spread of the Roman Empire, and the *pax augusta*, was the work of Providence to make possible the spread of the Christian gospel. Eusebius, writing a half-century later, now writes similarly of the Providential function of the Empire but with a new set of more complex motives. Origen acknowledges the working of divine Providence to bring about peace through Augustus, without thereby sacralizing the Empire or the emperor. Eusebius, on the other hand, now intends to place his Emperor, Constantine, as being in continuity with this succession of emperors—a fulfillment of the promise that was anticipated in Augustus and now finds its fullness in Constantine.

> For before [Christ] there was great variety of government, all nations being under tyrannical or democratic constitutions … until the Lord and Saviour came, and concurrently with his coming, the first Roman Emperor, Augustus, conquered the nations, variety of government was almost completely ended, and peace was spread through all the world.[576]

There is a palpable ambiguity here, as Eusebius wants to give credit for peace on earth to the coming of "the Lord and Savior," yet we see that this peace is not so much something which the Lord brought, but something which was brought "concurrently with his coming," by Augustus.[577]

So Eusebius' political agenda in praising the *pax augusta* is not hard to spot. The monarchy of Augustus finds its fulfillment in the *monotheistic* monarchy of Constantine. What we can see from this brief survey is that the pagans, such as Celsus, viewed the question of political unity and monotheism quite differently from the Christians. Eusebius, following Origen, puts forward a view that argues, entirely contrary to the logic of Celsus, that war is attributable either to demons or to the "fatalism of polytheistic nationalism."[578]

This alliance of analogy between the divine monarchy and the Roman emperor meant that the Empire had a specific interest in maintaining the notion of radical monarchy. Thus Erik Peterson notes that, "it was a pressing political interest that first drove the emperors to the side of the Arians."[579] For the Empire, an Arian political theology would be easier to defend, insofar as a more radical monotheism (and therefore monarchy) could be maintained. But, argues Peterson, the trinitarian theology of the orthodox Fathers not only denied the function of an Arian justification of power—the doctrine of the Trinity marks the point of impossibility for political theology as such.

The thesis of Erik Peterson asserts that orthodox trinitarian theology disrupts any attempt to validate any political configuration based upon a given doctrine of God. Polytheists and monotheists alike practiced this mode of "political theology." For the former, polytheism might represent the peaceful coexistence of national communities, for the latter, monotheism might represent the strong unifying force of centralized authority. In both cases there is some direct correspondence between the metaphysical-theological edifice and political structures. The Trinitarian understanding of God, however, lends

itself to no analogy with a human political structure. "This [Trinitarian] conception of unity had no correspondence in the created order."[580]

This denial of correspondence to the created order is pivotal for Peterson's argument. No earthly political system can use the Trinity as its model—therefore the doctrine of the Trinity renders political theology, as we have known it, impossible. Recent critics of Peterson have claimed, however, that this claim by Peterson is a denial of trinitarian monotheism as such, as if trinitarianism were a *tertium quid*, neither polytheistic nor monotheistic. Commentator Artur Mrówczyński-Van Allen summarizes the critique this way:

> [W]hat Peterson identifies as 'monotheism' is in reality only one of its variants; it is a unipersonal monotheism; … it is a type of Monarchianism, and by identifying monotheism with Monarchianism he is forced to contradict not only Gregory of Nazianzus but also other patristic theologians who had no issues whatsoever in understanding the orthodoxy of the 'monarchy of the triune God.'[581]

Mrówczyński-Van Allen goes on to attribute culpability for the totalitarianism that followed in Germany to Peterson's apparent rejection of trinitarian monotheism. By asserting that the Trinity is a rejection of the possibility of all political theology, Peterson denies the one avenue at the Christian's disposal to reject a unipersonal monarchy—namely a trinitarian monarchy. Unfortunately, Mrówczyński-Van Allen falls back on the same, now tired, politicization of trinitarianism that has been so dominant since Moltmann. He claims, "Trinitarian persons must be the prime analogate of anthropological communion."[582] Adding, "Trintarianism . . . effectively guards against monotheistic authoritarianism (totalitarianism),"[583]

But even beyond this, I think his reading of Peterson is simply incorrect. When Peterson claims to reject "political theology" *tout court*, some have mistakenly taken him to mean that he intends to "tidily separate theology from politics."[584] Or, as Mrówczyński-Van Allen will later claim, "Peterson excises from the life of the Church the arena of the political dimension, allowing this apparently neutral sphere to surrender to the domain of the secular."[585] But such a reading of Peterson simply couldn't be further from the truth. Peterson's critical claim is that, "For Christians, political involvement can never take place *except* under the presumption of faith in the triune God."[586]

This misreading of Peterson's political interest is rooted in a misreading of Peterson's apparent denial of trinitarian monarchy. Peterson, following Gregory of Nazianzus, to whom he is referring in the above citation regarding there being no creaturely correlate with the Trinity, nowhere denies the monarchy of the Trinity. It is precisely in his affirmation of the trinitarian monarchy that he rejects "political theology."[587] In this instance, by political theology, what he is rejecting is the *use* of theology to legitimize some political power by means of a theological analogy. The monarchy of the Trinity has no political analogy, it simply is the reign of God, in the Church.[588] And this—in and of itself—is deeply political. To live under the reign of the triune God, in the Church, is the "political involvement" of Christians, and it is why it can never occur except "under the presumption of faith in the triune God."

The doctrine of the Trinity, as understood in its historical, classical, and orthodox formulations, does not at all permit itself to be subject to the methods of political theologies of the Schmittian or post-Schmittian varieties. Such methods rely on analogies

between theological and political concepts, whether descriptive or prescriptive. But the doctrine of the Trinity, which posits God as eternal Mystery of one God in three Persons does not nor cannot lend itself to the support of any creaturely system. A single monarch cannot imitate the triune God, because the Most Holy Trinity is not merely a sole individual. A cabal of three co-equal persons cannot imitate the triune God, nor can a society governed by free and consenting citizens, because the Most Holy Trinity is not a collection or composite of different subjectivities. The Trinity is far from three "persons" in the ordinary, contemporary use of the word. The mystery and radical otherness of the Trinity, in fact, points us to one definitive political-theological conclusion, namely that it marks the point of impossibility for any such methods of political theology. Those who would seek to harness the metaphysical structures of Christian theology for political ends must either deny or ignore the doctrine of the Trinity or so thoroughly abuse and distort it so as to deny its classical orthodox formulation.

This is the message with which Peterson so eloquently concludes his essay:

> In the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, not only was monotheism as a political problem resolved and the Christian faith liberated from bondage to the Roman Empire, but a fundamental break was made with every "political theology" that misuses the Christian proclamation for the justification of a political situation. Only on the basis of Judaism and paganism can such a thing as a "political theology" exist. The Christian proclamation of the triune God stands beyond Judaism and paganism, even though the mystery of the Trinity exists only in the Godhead itself, and not in Creation. So too, the peace that the Christian seeks is won by no emperor, but is solely a gift of him who is "higher than all understanding."[589]

Peterson's language here is very carefully chosen. What he is rejecting as "political theology" is clearly referring to the utilization of theology for political ends,

which is built on the drawing of analogies between God and the created order. This does not mean that theology is of no political consequence. Far from it. So, in the pages that remain I will venture beyond Peterson, taking his thesis as determinative: "For Christians, political involvement can never take place except under the presumption of faith in the triune God."[590] What this looks like is the question of this dissertation and one to which I intend to offer an answer in these final pages.

Nationalism and the Trinity

In the opening pages of *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, Marvin and Ingle make a fascinating remark: "A hologram contains the information to reproduce a whole image in every one of its pieces. Flag practice and nationalism are like that, each piece a holographic element of a group myth. To start from any point quickly leads to the entire structure."[591] In other words, the whole of the myth of nationalism is contained within flag practice in a virtual way. Another analogy might be a biological cell, which contains within it a DNA blueprint for the entire structure, not only of its own composition, but of the whole body of which it is a part. The hologram, or the cell, is in a paradoxical way, simultaneously a part and the whole.

The very same is true of the doctrine of the Trinity within Christian theology. It is at once a part of Christian theology, it is Christian theology *proper* (that is, it is the Christian doctrine of God), and it also contains within itself the entirety of Christian (systematic) theology. The nation's flag, Marvin and Ingle argue, operates similarly. The flag is at once a part of the totality of the nationalist mythology, but also flag practice itself reflects all of the key components of that mythology. And, most importantly, the

flag is a totem—an incarnation, of sorts, of the divine Nation itself. The same is true of the doctrine of the Trinity, especially in light of Lonergan's four-point hypothesis. So to discuss nationalism and to discuss Trinitarianism is, in both cases, to discuss theology proper. The Nation and the Trinity are, in their own way, conceptualizations of divinity.[592]

The nation is, on one hand, a sovereign deity, but on the other hand the nation is its citizenry. So, in a pantheistic way, the god we worship when we worship the nation is ourselves. Politically what this means is that nationalism is and remains popular, even among liberals who are otherwise averse to embracing cultural myths of civic religion, precisely because nationalism has at least an apparent affinity with democracy. Even for those nation-states that are definitively undemocratic, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is still in the state's best interest to borrow from the sense of populism that nationalism evokes. Nation-states at least *evoke* a sense of the democratic, even if the regime is quite totalitarian.

The reason for the nation's ascendency in our time, and the reason for its enduring sovereignty, is because it so effectively functions as a transcendent object of veneration. Nationalism's reluctant supporters acknowledge this explicitly. Society cannot hold itself together purely on the basis of a dry and sterile "social contract." We stand for the anthem, we wave the flag, we sing the hymns, we protect the borders, we kill, and we offer the sacrifice of sons and daughters. That is what binds us together. Following Girard, we can say that only acts of sacrifice effectively bring social cohesion, and the difference between sacrifice and mere death is the ritualization of the sacred. The nation is the god to whom we can sacrifice in order to forge ourselves into a political

community. The ancient Romans understood this perfectly well, and it is why they allowed for a relative degree of religious freedom, so long as everyone cooperated in the imperial cult. Modern nations operate in the same way. Religious diversity is not a threat to social cohesion, so long as one's worship of one's own gods remains private and never overrides the public worship of the nation.

There is also, obviously, diversity within the national cult itself. These could be described as something akin to denominational divisions within the same religion. The disagreements between those who agree in most things and differ on a few is often the most bitter. And so it is within the politics of the nation-state, where we find an ever-widening ideological divide between Left and Right. But among the conservatives and progressives there is an underlying unity.

One form of nationalism, perhaps the more traditional and orthodox form, is to understand national identity as essentially a matter of "religious, racial, or cultural characteristics."[593] But secular, culturally progressive liberals, who despise homogeneity nevertheless embrace nationalism simply by defining the parameters of national inclusion differently. For them, full inclusion into the nation is offered to all who can faithfully recite the national creed. The articles of the American creed, as an example, according to Antatol Lieven, are "faith in liberty, constitutionalism, the law, democracy, individualism, and cultural and political egalitarianism."[594]

In the United States, Republicans may appear more overtly nationalistic because they endorse a more traditional form of nationalism, with strong cultural, or even racial, undertones. But the Democratic Party is no less nationalistic, they simply conceive of membership in the nation as being more open, rather than closed. This is evidenced by

the fact that progressive policy issues are still framed in terms of American values, the Constitution, and so on. For example, Planned Parenthood and other abortion advocacy groups frame their work of defending abortion in terms of a "Constitutional right." This is more than a defense of abortion's legal status. To frame something like abortion as a Constitutional right is to tether it to American values. In other words, to deny a woman access to abortion is to restrict her liberty in a fundamentally un-American way.

Even environmentalism, which, on its face, is a thoroughly non-nationalist, if not anti-nationalist concern, is couched in nationalist language. Even the Democratic Party knows that in order to mobilize the population on the issue of climate change, it has to be framed as an issue of national self-interest. And thus we hear of the Green New Deal. Rather than framing environmental action primarily in terms of the interests of humanity and our common home, the idea of a Green New Deal evokes imagery of economic prosperity, job creation, and a national revival.

Clearly, then, on the Left and the Right, the national cult can be interpreted differently, but it cannot be outright rejected. Yet, if we consider the question of Peterson's assertion, "For Christians, political involvement can never take place except under the presumption of faith in the triune God,"[595] then it would seem that the Christian can do nothing other than reject the national cult.

Christians, in their political engagement, cannot become beholden to a nationalist paradigm. As it says in the second-century Epistle to Diognetus, regarding Christians: "Any country can be their homeland, but every homeland is a foreign country."[596] Christian politics breaks the dichotomy of Left and Right precisely by rejecting the underlying assumption of both, that is, a nation-centric political point of view. The most

urgent need of our time, therefore, is to foster as many modes as possible of trans-national solidarity. For the Christian, the primary vessel of this solidarity is the Church—one and catholic, united and universal.

Furthermore, because faith in the triune God is faith in the entirety of Christian revelation, then anything that is only covertly or anonymously Christian could by no means go by the name Trinitarian. The Trinity is not a form that can be emptied of its content and then reapplied in a new context. That God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is irredeemably, ineluctably Christian, through and through. So, to restate Peterson's thesis somewhat would be to say, "For Christians, political involvement can never take place except under the presumption of *being a Christian*."

Erik Peterson lamented in his correspondence with Adolf von Harnack how the Evangelical Church had become no longer a truly public (*öffentlich*) entity. The Church can be public in at least two ways, Peterson says. One way is by legal establishment, and this was maintained by Protestants for many centuries, but with the rise of various disestablishmentarian movements throughout Europe, and the first amendment of the United States Constitution, this became quite rare. The other way in which the Church can be public is, in a sense, for the Church to *be* its own public. This, Peterson says, would "entail a return to the Catholic understanding of the Church and to Catholic ecclesiastical law."[597]

By the restoration of *Öffentlichkeit* it seems Peterson refers to the de-privatization of the faith. The Church can no longer see itself as a mere organization within or under the nation-state. That is why I use this expression that the Church ought to be its own public. Firstly, this means that the Church must become a transcendent locus of

solidarity. In the modern Western world, where ecclesial affiliation is often treated with such bland indifference, even by practitioners, it is evident that to be a member of this or that church means very little. Compare the force of this identification with the cult of national identity. In all but the rarest of circumstances an individual will see his or her national identity and state citizenship as constituting the weightiest of identities. To be a member of some ecclesial community is more on par with being the member of a local gym. This would certainly have been unthinkable for Christians of the past or for those who are living under persecution. For the Church to be public, therefore, is for the Church to be identified as the location of a non-trivial identity that is not merely a private or personal matter.

For Peterson, the Catholic Church is public even without the mediation of a state government, in light of its dogmatic ecclesial authority, which many Protestant churches do not even claim for themselves.[598] "The Church ceases to be a 'public' entity when it renounces the capacity to make dogmatic decisions."[599] This is a crucial claim by Peterson because it recognizes that the Church can only emerge from its non-trivial status insofar as she possesses real authority. The average citizen would be more concerned about failing to pay taxes to the government than failing to tithe to the Church. But why? Because the legitimate authority of the state to collect, and its ability to enforce such a law, is universally recognized. Of course, it does not belong to the Church to exercise material or coercive power. But she can and must exercise authority in those domains that are proper to her. This is expressed by means of the enforcement of dogmatic and liturgical norms.

In light of this privatization of the faith, Peterson theorizes that the Evangelical churches, perhaps even without knowing it, have tried to reclaim public status in at least three different ways. One route has been the turn to "universal reason." A religion of rationalism can reassert itself in the public sphere because it has rid itself of all the scandal of particularity. The second is a devolution into "mere feeling," and what he calls a "secularized mysticism." The third, he calls activism, or we might even use the term pragmatism. Here is the idea that the truths, which in a bygone era were defined dogmatically, can be expressed "without words" in the works of charity.[600] All of these are clearly visible actions taken by Protestant churches in the 19th and 20th centuries, but, says Peterson, they must be seen as failed attempts at establishing the Church as public, because they make their attempts at the expense of the particularity of the Christian message. As Peterson himself notes, even Luther did not ever intend that the truths of the faith should be replaced by "universal reason," "feeling," or even "fraternal service."[601]

To speak more directly to the condition of the Roman Catholic Church today, one might wonder what Peterson, who died in 1960, would have to say about the "public" status of the Catholic Church in the decades following the Second Vatican Council. The so-called spirit of Vatican II has turned the Church away from both of the ways in which Peterson believes the Church can rightly be called public. *Dignitatis humanae*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965, for instance, adopted a drastically different tone on the issue of religious liberty and confessional governments than all previous popes. The Church has always understood that certain errors and even crimes against the moral law must be legally tolerated. Nevertheless, there was in previous eras a clearly stated preference for governments to take a confessional position of submission to the Catholic

faith. So, even for Catholics today, this avenue of being a "public" Church is largely closed, not just by secular governments but by post-conciliar pontiffs who have not endorsed confessional states.[602]

The second path forward, foregoing the possibility of a confessional state, is for the Church to assert itself as public without the mediation of the state. While this is largely dependent on the positions held by the Supreme Pontiff, there are steps that can be taken by those outside of Rome (local priests, religious, and even laity) to foster a culture of the Church as public.

As we have already seen, the nation exercises its sovereignty especially by means of its practice of sacrifice. The nation, particularly its flag, is made and kept sacred by the blood of those who are offered to it. This combination of sovereignty and sacrifice is a shadow of Christ who is both king and priest. William Cavanaugh's work shows this to be no coincidence. The modern state was specifically created as a kind of parody of the Church, and so it comes as no surprise to see how the nation comes to perform both of these Messianic functions for the public.[603]

In light of this realization, the Church can assert (or perhaps, better, reassert) her *Öffentlichkeit* by means of her liturgy. Λειτουργία, of course, means a public work, which, as Peterson says, "is not an initiation dependent on a voluntary judgment." The liturgical act is a kind of debt that one owes to society, or even to the state. That Christian worship is a "divine liturgy," is a sign that "the Church stands much closer to political entities like kingdom and polis, rather than voluntary associations and unions."[604] The sacred liturgy therefore uniquely forms the Church as a public entity insofar as in the

liturgy she exercises her legitimate authority by means of liturgical law, but also insofar as the public act of worship gathers and forms a community under a new identity.

Of particular interest to Peterson is the role of angels in the liturgy and the implications of their involvement in Christian worship for Christian politics. In one of the most ancient parts of the Christian liturgy, the *Sanctus*, the faithful on earth join with "Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim . . ." in proclaiming the glory of the thrice holy God. In the Mass, as the Christian faithful participate in this celestial worship, we are reoriented away from the earthly *polis* and temple and toward the heavenly *polis* and temple.[605]

Peterson especially emphasizes how this worship is also a negation of all "national hymns," because it is not only sung by cherubim and seraphim, but by those won from every "tribe and tongue and people and nation."[606] The biblical book of Revelation, a highly liturgical text, consistently highlights the celestial participation of worship as well as its "transnational" quality. The sacred liturgy is, therefore, not only a public act of the Church, but also one that sets itself in opposition to the narrowly nationalistic public space created by the state. As one moves up the vertical axis, participating more profoundly in the worship of the angels, then one's horizontal reach is also widened. All of creation is called inward and upward in the participation of the worship of the triune God. "[W]hile every type of ethnic singing, folk music, and national anthem eventually succumbs to its inevitable decline."[607]

But angelology has an even stronger connection to Peterson's thesis on public worship than he is able to convey in his short work on the subject. One aspect of classical

angelology on which Peterson does not touch is the specifically political and national character of those angels called Principalities (*prīncipātūs* or ἀρχαὶ). Of these Thomas Aquinas wrote: "who, as presiding over the government of peoples and kingdoms (which occupies the first and principal place in the Divine ministrations), are the first in the execution thereof; 'for the good of a nation is more divine than the good of one man,' and hence it is written, 'The prince of the kingdom of the Persians resisted me.'"[608] The Principalities are those angelic beings that God has set over the government of nations as spiritual rulers. Aquinas notes two possibilities regarding the fates of the Principalities.

One possibility, held by St. Jerome, is that some of the Principalities, like those among all the other choirs, fell into sin and are, in fact, demonic powers. The celestial "Prince of Persia," for instance, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, is in fact a demonic spiritual force ruling Persia and opposing the liberation of Israel. If one were to adopt this view, then everything that Marvin and Ingle wrote about human sacrifice to the bloodthirsty god of the nation would take on a far more literal meaning.

To worship the nation, from a theological point of view, is at least idolatry. But Jerome's angelology would raise the stakes even further by asserting that there is a truly preternatural spirit that is the recipient of this false worship. In defense of this thesis we can recall that St. Paul writes to the Ephesians that our struggle is not "against flesh and blood," but against "principalities [ἀρχάς] and powers [ἐξουσίας]."[609] And again to the Colossians that by his Cross, the Lord Jesus triumphed over these very same ἀρχάς and ἐξουσίας.[610]

Had Peterson adopted this perspective then his thesis would have only been strengthened. The warning here is identical as that given to the Corinthians, St. Paul

writes: "What pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons."[611] The Eucharistic liturgy and the national liturgy are as fundamentally incompatible as are the worship of God and the worship of demons.

Alas, Peterson does not take up this line of argument and perhaps because neither does Thomas Aquinas. Following Pope St. Gregory the Great, Aquinas believes the Prince of Persia to be a good angel.[612] And while this position does not bring as great a contrast between God and the nation as the former, it nevertheless affirms Peterson's thesis that the Christian liturgy necessarily reorders our political loyalties. For while we may be subject to the ἀρχάς in the spiritual order, just as we are subject to the local authority, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we join with the ἀρχάς in adoring the triune God.

Here, then, we are reminded that the political authorities are subordinate to Christ. And if the ἀρχάς glorifies God, then the nation over which such an angel has dominion ought *also* to glorify God. Short of advocating for a confessional state, following Peterson, one must say that the Christian liturgy demands a relativization of the nation-state. The state consolidates power in the "imagined community" of the nation, subsequent to the dissolution and relativization of other social bonds and forms of association, including the Church. It is incumbent upon the Church, therefore, to reverse course—to reject its own relativization and subordination and instead to re-relativize the nation-state.

Cavanaugh states this claim emphatically when he writes: "The Church must break its imagination out of captivity to the nation-state. The Church must constitute itself as an alternative social space."[613] A tool for "reimagining" the state, which Cavanaugh borrows from Alisdair MacIntyre, is to think of the nation-state like a telephone company: "a large bureaucratic provider of goods and services that never quite provides value for money."[614] We must strip it of its transcendent power. We need not, at this point, be revolutionaries, nor need we ever to be anarchists, but no longer can the Church tolerate the idolatry of nationalism.

Idolatry, as St. Paul describes in his letter to the Romans, is the worship of the creature rather than the Creator and is itself a violation of the natural law. By worshipping the creature, and ultimately by worshipping one's self, the idolater can justify all manner of wickedness in the name of his own self-preservation and self-gratification. Idolaters receive "in their own persons the due penalty for their error."[615] In terms of nationalist idolatry, the self-inflicted wound of this collective narcissism is an inability to effectively cooperate on a global scale for the common good of workers, the care of our common home, and the preservation of peace. Therefore the Church can and must work "to promote the creation of spaces in which alternative economies and authorities flourish."[616]

This can be accomplished through direct action that circumvents the mediation of the nation-state. For example, the Church, rather than solely relying on the social welfare programs offered and subsidized by the federal government, can and must engage directly with the nation's poor. The Church must resist the subsuming of all charitable acts under the aegis of the nation-state, for as we have discussed the nation-state has its

own set of political and economic interests. To serve immigrant communities, as another example, the Church can simultaneously *advocate* for their legal status and acceptance while at the same time serving them directly, regardless of the approval of the state. This is what is meant by direct action. The creation of alternative social spaces means being as independent as possible from the state for the sake of serving those whom the state often fails.

But one must also be careful not to fall into the trap of "activism" against which Peterson warns. The threat of activism that Peterson identifies is that the essential proclamation of the faith will be supplanted by mere acts of charity. As essential as *action* is, we cannot give way to *activism*. The threat comes not in the *kind* of political action in which Christians engage, or even in the *amount*, but rather in the *relative priority* that direct political action is given. Unfortunately, even direct action can effect the Church's privatization insofar as it may serve as supplementary work to the nation-state. Rather than challenging, such activism can actually reinforce the spiritual sovereignty of the nation-state.

The source of the Church's *Öffentlichkeit* is its public worship—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This sacrifice frees the imagination from the cultic power of national totem worship and sacrifice. And this sacrifice forms an alternative society, the Church, the Body of Christ. The essential difference between these two sacrifices constitutes the nation and the Church as two essentially different sorts of communities. As Marvin and Ingle describe it, the ritual of national sacrifice involves the hero who crosses the borders and who, by his blood, re-consecrates those boundaries. It is essentially antagonistic and depends on human conflict. To put it in ordinary terms, the

nation, as a community, is defined competitively over and against other human communities.

The primary interest of the nation-state is to protect its own self-interests and that of its citizens. Nationalism, as described in the previous chapter, functions as an expression of collective narcissism. Regardless of how one defines entrance into the national community, it remains the same for both conservatives and progressives that national self-interest must prevail. And the most sacred act of the nation is the sacrifice that reinforces the boundaries and borders between citizen and non-citizen, between *us* and *them*.

The Sacrifice of the Mass, on the other hand, has the entirely opposite meaning. As Rene Girard discovered, the logic of Christian sacrifice, as portrayed in the Gospels, unmasks and overturns the scapegoating mechanism, which is still quite operative in the rituals of sacrifice in the nation-state. "[W]hereas the scapegoating mechanism unites a community against a victim, the Church is a community united in solidarity with a Victim."[617] Some have argued that Girard's theory undoes the possibility of sacrifice as such, even Eucharistic sacrifice. But this is not the case, because the sacrifice of Christ, offered again on the altar, does not reinstantiate the scapegoat mechanism, but continues to expose it. For in the Sacrifice of the Mass, we are only invited more deeply into solidarity with this saving Victim. Unlike in an atonement of penal substitution, the faithful are invited to perpetually offer themselves as a "living sacrifice" at the Mass.

As the Letter to the Hebrews puts it brilliantly: "So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, bearing abuse for him. For here we have no lasting city, but we

seek the city which is to come."[618] This passage of Scripture summarizes the point perfectly, the sacrifice of Christ constitutes a new people, who turn away from the reigning *polis*, and instead go "outside the gate" in solidarity with the Lord. Their affiliation with the Victim(s) of society is an expression of their seeking of the city "that is to come."

According to Girard, Nietzsche correctly identified the "anthropological key" to Christianity, namely, concern for victims.[619] And of course the Catholic Church, in every age, has recognized the connection between Christ's real presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and his presence in the poor. Even the Catholic Catechism itself states: "The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren."[620] The Holy Eucharist, as the source and summit of the Christian faith, both generates and leads us to acts of charity. To put it very simply, the nation-state always has as its primary concern the care of its own members. The Church, on the other hand, has as its first priority, not just the care of Christians, but of all those most in need.

In the Eucharist we are called to participate in the sufferings of the Victim, and therefore, in some way, of all victims. This is the nature of the mystical body of Christ, formed by baptism and the Eucharist, our sacramental union with the Lord Jesus is at the same time our union with one another. The Cross can never be read merely individualistically: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."[621]

William Cavanaugh further discusses how participation in the Eucharist reconfigures our understanding of space and time. Hearkening to Benedict Anderson's

thesis on the emergence of national consciousness out of a new awareness of simultaneity, thanks to print capitalism, Cavanaugh argues that the Mass also creates its own conceptualization of space-time. At every Mass, in every rite, the believer enters a different time—the same time—that sacred hour of Christ's passion. In the Mass, therefore, the Church throughout all time is gathered together at once, reminding us of exactly what kind of Body this is. It is a democracy, of sorts, as Chesterton famously quipped, it is the democracy of the dead. The Church refuses to "submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about."[622]

Perhaps even more radically, however, the Mass "transgresses national boundaries and redefines who our fellow-citizens are."[623] The Church, at Mass, is a gathering throughout all of time, but also throughout space. An important element of Catholic Eucharistic theology is that the *whole Christ* is contained under each species, and under each *part*, meaning that in one fragment of the sacred Host, in one drop from the Chalice, is the whole Christ. Therefore, at each Mass, no matter the number of participants, no matter where or when it takes place, those gathered are truly the Church catholic. The 'whole Church'—Church militant, suffering, and triumphant—is there and then gathered together.

According to Anderson's thesis, national consciousness emerges as a result of print capitalism, by means of which local languages were consolidated, and new imaginations of space and time were created. We have stated just now how the Mass reconfigures and counteracts this "national" space-time. It is therefore also curious to note how Anderson explicitly acknowledges that national consciousness arises as a result of the victory of vernacular over the sacred languages. One might speculate that the

Öffentlichkeit of the Church could be supported also through restoration of Latin in the sacred liturgies of the Roman Rite. Of course, the restoration of Latin is not a miraculous panacea. I simply make the modest proposal that if, as Peterson claims, the Church demonstrates its *Öffentlichkeit* by means of exercising her dogmatic authority and in conducting her liturgy, then what in the Church could be more truly public than the rubrics that for centuries strictly governed her liturgical celebrations?

It is essential that the Church find her identity, even her political status, first in liturgy, and not external works of mercy. Otherwise a spirit of "activism" can prevail in which the proclamation of the gospel and the hope of everlasting life become secondary. This is why the first commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and the *second* is to love your neighbor as yourself. Love of God is necessary for providing the proper frame for love of neighbor. That being said, the Church *is* called to act in light of the gospel, "under the presumption of faith in the triune God." So in the next section I would like to offer a few practical considerations that might flow from this understanding of political theology.

Guided by the essential principles of Catholic Social Teaching, I will consider, in brief, four major political topics: war, immigration, the climate crisis, and labor. The human suffering created in these areas is part of the self-inflicted trauma created by nationalist idolatry. Therefore it is incumbent upon the Church, in its rejection of nationalist ideology, to also seek to heal these wounds. And I choose these as examples of where the Church may perform uniquely political-theological action because of their enormous moral weight. Certainly many other social issues can and do call the Church to

action, but let these suffice as mere illustrations of the political-theological action that I have in mind here.

Subsidiarity and Solidarity

The two great organizing principles of Catholic Social Teaching are subsidiarity and solidarity. By subsidiarity is meant, "the coordination of society's activities in a way that supports the internal life of the local communities," and solidarity: "the virtue enabling the human family to share fully the treasure of material and spiritual goods."[624] These are the two poles between which Catholics must think about social engagement. For on the one hand, we are bound by the principle of subsidiarity to value and support local forms of organization, growing as it does out of the must basic unity of social life, the family. On the other hand, we cannot fall into the extreme of isolationism, where we are only concerned about "ours." Rather, our concern must always be for the common good, wherein the "common" is the universal community of the human race, and even of life itself.

In light of the ideological threat of nationalism, the urgent need of human society today is to increase our solidarity across national boundaries. However, it is necessary to still articulate clearly that one can never abandon the principle of subsidiarity. In the words of Pope Pius XI:

> [I]t is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.[625]

In the urgency to overcome nationalist divides, one cannot fall into the arms of sheer globalism. And, while we work toward the creation of avenues for greater transnational solidarity, in the meantime the reality is that we live in a political world defined by the authority of the nation-state. It is therefore in keeping with Christian responsibility to: "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare."[626]

To avoid all ambiguity, the call to reject *nationalism*, is not that a rejection of all politics at the national level. Rather, it is a reminder that national politics must always be relativized in the light of both local and global concerns. It is the idolatry of the nation that must be rejected. And ideally, one day, through the deliberate efforts of those who have created opportunities for transnational solidarity, the political antagonism of nations can be laid aside and more human forms of government can emerge. For now, the Christian is still obliged, at every level of government, to pursue so far as possible the protection of human dignity and the common good.

Paul's instructions to the Romans apply to us today: "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."[627] This remains, in principle, true—but always with the caveat that, "We must obey God rather than men."[628] A Christian rejection of nationalism does not entail an advocacy of anarchism. But it does mean a radical relativization of national power, in favor of both local and global concerns.

In the rejection of nationalism, local churches should, at a minimum, follow the directives given by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which stated that: "Although the art and decoration of the liturgical space will be that of the local culture,

identifying symbols of particular cultures, groups, or nations are not appropriate as permanent parts of the liturgical environment."[629]

Contrast those instructions with US Code, Title 36, Chapter 10, Section 173, which states that when the American flag is displayed in a church, the flag, "should hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right." The symbolic significance of this display is highly relevant. In churches where the American flag is displayed, to the right hand of the speaker, it is given the position of superior prominence and highest honor. Ironically then, other flags, such as the Christian flag in Protestant worship settings, or the flag of Vatican City in a Catholic church, are often displayed on the speaker's left. While the average observer is surely ignorant of what is being communicated, what is explicitly stated by these positionings is that the nation-state is to be the recipient of higher honor and greater respect that the Church itself.[630]

The removal of national symbols from the Christian liturgy is a relatively small gesture, but an essential one. For it is in the liturgy, especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that the Church is truly public. It is in the Mass that the Church identifies herself as the Church, participating as she does in the mystery of the triune God. The public nature of the liturgy is the time and place where the juxtaposition of Church and nation should be most clearly seen. Therefore, especially during the sacred liturgy, to venerate a national totem, is as much a violation of the first commandment as the worship of the golden calf at Sinai.

However, while the rejection of signs of nationalist worship, flags, hymns, and so forth, should be considered necessary steps, they are not sufficient in rejecting altogether

the cult of the nation and developing the Church as truly public. What follows then are four areas (war, immigration, environment, and labor) where Christians, at the level of the individual, the local parish, or the diocese can take concrete action to engage politically "under the presumption of faith in the triune God." In each case what is most pressing is to favor subsidiarity and solidarity as the Church asserts *itself* as a public body, and as a locus for transnational solidarities that can build up the common good of the human family.

War

The great synthesis of all social sin is to be found in war. Exploitation and violence of *every* kind are there. Christians are duty-bound to advocate for peace and to never be out paced in its pursuit. Unfortunately, the powers of war do not rest in the hands of the Church, and so there is often no direct means by which Christians can prevent war. Indeed, there are many occasions in which Christians are not free even to avoid contributing in some way to the war effort.

But consider the example of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian farmer, beheaded in 1943 for refusing to swear an oath to Hitler when called up to military duty. It is a blight on the Church's hierarchy that, having consulted his local priest, as well as his bishop, Jägerstätter was advised that he had a moral obligation to serve the fatherland.[631] This case is an especially relevant example, because unlike many instances of so-called conscientious objectors, Jägerstätter's objection was not one of pure pacifism. Rather, he could not swear loyalty to the Führer—much like the early Christians who would rather have died a martyrs death than to burn incense before an

image of Caesar. In fact, “his opposition to Hitler began from a nightmare he experienced about a train that was taking people to hell. To put it bluntly, Jägerstätter's sanctity was built upon the belief that the terrors of hell could befall anybody who put the values of this world before those of the gospel.”[632]

Christians must also think further about the care for victims of war in all nations. This is especially true in the case of refugees. Christians are obliged, in the light of the gospel, to make no discrimination in terms of care afforded to individuals based on the nation of origin. The recent refugee crisis sparked by the Syrian Civil War is a clear example. Many European bishops expressed a highly problematic ethno-centric line of reasoning. Dominik Cardinal Duka, for instance, the archbishop of Prague, said: "The whole history of humanity shows how uncontrolled migration causes violence and conflict, as well as economic and cultural collapse." Archbishop Stanislav Zvolensky of Bratislava spoke in a similarly problematic way, adding: “The larger the Muslim community, the likelier the violence—in such a situation, it's legitimate to ask about the religion these people profess, and how beneficial it is to our society.”[633]

Even if one were to bracket the blatantly Islamophobic tone, notice in these statements that the primary point of view is that of the state and its welfare. This is veiled in language of “Christian civilization,” but the intent is perfectly clear. Fortunately Pope Francis has more appropriately addressed the crisis, giving clear direction to every European parish to house at least one refugee family.[634] That is a perfectly practical, and appropriate Christian response to the crisis of war in the light of the gospel. For the primary concern of the Church, unlike the nation-state, are not members of one’s own community. The Church cannot deny aid to a refugee because they are Muslim or Syrian,

rather than Christian or European. The Church is not called to serve itself, or any nation at all, but the "least of these," wherever they may be found.

Immigration

Similar in many ways to the refugee crisis, there is also a more general concern regarding immigration and especially in the United States there has been an implementation of policies antithetical to the Christian perspective. As was discussed extensively in chapter five, the creation and safeguarding of the national border is a highly symbolic act that is essential to the maintenance of the cultic power of a nation, especially as its material sovereignty is waning.[635] I also briefly addressed in that chapter that it is irresponsible and hypocritical to scapegoat one political party or one president for the moral crisis at the US – Mexico border. Now I intend to state more clearly what is an appropriate theo-political response to this pressing political issue.

First, there is a very important distinction to be made between moral principle and political policy. Feasibility, popularity, financial costs, and so forth, are the factors that must be weighed by politicians and legislators as they consider specific policies. And a "good" politician or legislator will act in accord with these considerations, for the sake of their own electability, as well as the good of their constituents. But from the moral perspective, and especially from an ecclesial perspective, such considerations are by no means primary.[636] The Church (and therefore the Christian, whose Christian identity ought to supersede his or her national identity) cannot take as her *first* concern the good of any particular nation or state. Rather, with an eye toward universal human dignity, the Church must always stand on behalf of the common good of the human race. Therefore, a

potential wedge can be driven between moral principle and political policy. Something may be "bad" politically—costly, unpopular, unfeasible—and still be morally good or even necessary.

From the point of view of Catholic moral teaching it is fundamental that one may never do evil that good may come. The Church rejects all utilitarianism. In the case of immigration, therefore, to neglect, even in one instance, the intrinsic dignity, human equality, rights of the family, of any immigrant, asylum seeker, or refugee, is to commit an act of moral evil, regardless of what political benefit may accrue.[637] Moral obligations that overrule the perceived good of the nation-state would include the rights of families, and especially of parents. The separation of families, especially children from their parents, should be a means taken by the state only in the gravest of circumstances. Unfortunately, in the case of immigrant families, whether by means of deportation or the separation of migrant families at border detention facilities, the separation of families is a routine experience.[638]

One concrete example of direct action on the part of local parishes is the US Sanctuary movement, which began at the Southside Presbyterian Church of Tucson, Arizona, in the 1980s. The movement eventually spread to over four hundred congregations across North America. This network of churches cooperated to provide sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, especially those under threat of deportation. This was a radical act of civil disobedience, for which members such as Sister Darlene Nicgorski were charged and convicted for human smuggling. Furthermore, the movement was led by those who understood their work as overtly ecclesial. It was imperative, in their mind, that the movement never be exploited for political gain. Rather the first and

foremost concern must always be the preservation of human dignity in light of the image of God instantiated in the human person.[639]

More recently, spontaneous sanctuary protest movements have taken place in France, also connected with churches. The so-called *Mouvement de sans-papiers* began in 1996 with the occupation of *Église Saint-Ambroise* in Paris. Three hundred and twenty-four Africans occupied the church demanding regularization of their immigration status. Police entered after four days of protest and arrested the occupants. Months later another similar invocation of sanctuary took place at the Church of St. Bernard in Paris, nicknamed *Notre Dame des Sans-Papiers*. At St. Bernard the immigrants demanding regularization stayed for months before the police "broke down the church doors with axes, used tear gas on mothers and babies, and dragged everyone out."[640] Twenty years later, *Notre Dame des Sans-Papiers*, still provide shelter to undocumented immigrants.

These are particularly helpful examples of ecclesial direct action that recognizes the Church as herself a public and political body, independent of the nation-state. And insofar as there is a conflict between the moral and legal demands placed upon an individual by the Church and the State, the Christian is obliged to act in keeping with the moral principles of the Church, as the participants of the US Sanctuary and *Sans-Papiers* movements did.

Climate Crisis

Climate change is expected to radically drive up the number of immigrants throughout the twenty-first century. Those who are forced to move "due to growing problems like water scarcity, crop failure, sea-level rise and storm surges," is estimated to

be in the tens of millions by 2050 according to a recent study.[641] This and other threats to the common good of the human race are at stake in the environmental degradation committed on a massive scale. As with the other issues, from an ecclesial perspective one must resist the temptation to partisanship and ideologizing. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has said in their statement on climate change: "At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family."[642]

Unfortunately, because governments and major corporations generate the vast majority of environmental pollutants, individuals and even small communities can easily feel helpless.[643] It seems that environmental disaster is unique insofar as in this arena the Church *qua* Church is least powerful but most essential.

The Church is least powerful insofar as she has no direct means of significantly altering carbon emissions or greenhouse gasses. The only means available to her are the collective means of her individual members. As small as it may be, the National Conferences of Catholic Bishops ought to take whatever steps are available to them to encourage and coordinate environmental responsibility among the laity—especially those laypeople who may be in political and corporate positions of power to effect greater change. One example of a specific change of policy that would be advantageous, is for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to end their suppression of Friday abstinence. The current Code of Canon Law (1983) continues to forbid the consumption of meat on Fridays. However, the US Bishops have released the laity from this obligation,

encouraging the substitution of another penitential act according to the individuals choosing.

The return of the imposition of this practice would be of benefit in two ways. First, the reduction of the consumption of meat is a means of reducing greenhouse gasses for which many climate activists have called. Secular attempts at reducing meat consumption have led to a growing movement of "Meatless Mondays." Yet the Church already has a tradition of a weekly abstention from meat, but has simply failed to maintain it. The second, and perhaps more crucial benefit of returning to the ancient practice, is that it is an assertion of the distinct and public character of the Church. The Church is public (and in that sense political) when she exercises her authority in matters of doctrine, as well as discipline. To forbid the consumption of meat on Fridays is a legitimate exercise of the episcopal authority and a reminder to the laity that the Church is a public body with its own internal legal authority, an authority to "bind" and "loose." And abiding by this, and other such customs, helps to sustain a sense of Catholic identity and culture in an increasingly secular world.

This is of course an incredibly small gesture and almost certainly negligible in its effects. And that is why I say Church is virtually powerless in the arena of environmental protection. Yet, it is also true that she is most essential to it. For, as is clear, the greatest obstacles to a true and effective response to environmental crises are the political and economic concerns of productivity, competitiveness, cost-effectiveness, and so forth that drive corporations and governments away from clean and sustainable forms of energy and production. What is needed is the development of entirely new models of economic and political organization. Nationalism and capitalism are such tremendous obstacles to

the universal common good that little hope remains of addressing these pressing concerns within such a framework. Whatever may someday replace nationalism and capitalism will need to be grounded in a more dignified view of the human person, and of creation as a whole.

And so, as trivial as it may seem, Pope Francis is essentially correct in the approach he takes in *Laudato si*. "I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."[644] Dialogue seems quite insufficient in the face of environmental catastrophe. But what else do we have? Unless there is a "conversation which includes everyone," that is, until there is universal human solidarity, there is very little that *can* be done. And it is this universal human solidarity that the Church, at its best, both believes in and works toward.

Labor

Finally, in terms of possible practical steps forward to be taken, a word must be said about the rights and dignity of workers in the modern world. This is, in some ways, the most central of the issues from the Christian perspective, for from the time of the preaching of Christ himself it has been concern for "the poor" that has animated the Apostles, Fathers, Doctors and saints of the Church. If, as I have said, the primary concern of the nation-state is the good of its citizens (especially its wealthiest); then, by total contrast, the primary concern of the Church is the good of humanity, *especially its poorest*. For while a nation may be judged according to how it treats its own, God will

judge the Church according to how it has treated the poor. At the very heart of the Christian gospel, therefore, is this urgent mandate to care for the poor of all nations. This, of course, can be and has been done by means of various charitable works of mercy. But in recent centuries, as we have entered into a time of greater historical consciousness, it has come to the attention of many in the Church and in the world, that problems of economic exploitation must be addressed at the root. We must not simply alleviate the sufferings of the poor (though we must do that as well). We must also confront the structures that generate radical inequality and oppression.

The magisterium of the Catholic Church has, historically, been quite clear and resolute in its opposition to Marxism, Communism, socialism, and the like. And there are many reasons for this and many different ways to understand the nature of that opposition. But one of the simplest ideas of Marx, expressed in the famous conclusion to the *Manifesto* itself, is that the greatest obstacle to the liberation of workers is their opposition to *each other* in the form of national divides. The political logic of Marxism, in its barest form, is that workers must find their solidarity in each other, rather than in their respective nations. They have been deceived into believing that the good of the country is their good, when in fact it is the good of the owners of capital. Though the implementation of these ideas was often marked by catastrophic failure, especially insofar as there was regression into nationalist ideologies (think of Stalin's "socialism in one country,") the basic insight was and remains true. In fact, this creation of a transnational organization for the solidarity of the poor is in many ways a parody of the Church. If the Church is to reject Marxism it will be for the same reason that it rejects all

heresies: because they "don't go far enough," and are therefore distortions of the truly catholic faith.

Much has changed in the nearly two centuries since Marx began writing on political economy. But for all that has changed, an essential truth remains the same, the poor and working classes are in need of liberation, of self-determination, and therefore they are in need of transnational solidarity. There must be some global body that will struggle and advocate for the dignity and rights of workers, not just as citizens of a particular nation, but *as workers*, indeed, as human beings. This body ought to be the Church, for the Church is always called to a radical universality.

Pope Benedict XVI himself, in his encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, pointed out the inadequacy of existing national labor unions: "The global context in which work takes place also demands that national labour unions, which tend to limit themselves to defending the interests of their registered members, should turn their attention to those outside their membership, and in particular to workers in developing countries where social rights are often violated."[645] So not only is the Church broader in its compass than national movements, it is also more radical in its demands. For in light of the traditional teachings of the Church with respect to marriage, family, and human sexuality, the notion of a just wage is radically transformed.

As Pope Pius XI argues in *Quadragesimo anno* the economy should be arranged in such a way that a single income should be sufficient to support a large family. These ends can never be achieved under the current political and economic structures. So the Church calls upon the people of the world to engage in creative action to facilitate structural change. We must work "to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to

promote the integral development of the poor." This entails, "the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few." So advises Pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium*, but he adds this warning: "Changing structures without generating new convictions and attitudes will only ensure that those same structures will become, sooner or later, corrupt, oppressive and ineffectual."[646]

Once again, we see the need for action, but action that is born out of thoughtful, prayerful contemplation. And this is the guiding principle behind all that has been said in this section regarding war, immigration, environmental concerns, and labor. The needs of the world demand action. And so the Church must hear and answer this call. But the Church must be careful not to be swept into a mere "activism," as Peterson warned against. It is this temptation that has led so many political theologians to accept such distortions of the faith for the sake of politics.

When the faith is diminished and secularized in this way, especially in the name of pragmatism or utility, then the meaning of faith is lost altogether. If the truths of Christianity, or of any religion, can be reduced to such simple practical matters or to a political ideology, then the faith itself can be dispensed with. Once Jesus has taught me to "be kind," I no longer need Jesus, I just need to "be kind." Like a husk that is tossed aside when the kernel is found, so theology, ironically, becomes superfluous in many political theologies.

Conclusion

What is the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and political theology? What difference does God's triune nature make, if any, to the work of political theology? There is no better answer to this question than that offered by Erik Peterson: the doctrine of the Trinity means the end of political theology. It marks the point of impossibility for the whole program. This, of course, does not mean the abandonment of politics on the part of the Church, as some have misunderstood. On the contrary, the Petersonian rejection of political theology is an embrace of the Church as public, and theology as political. Perhaps to state it more clearly, then, the doctrine of the Trinity marks the end of political theology and the beginning of *theological politics*.

The doctrine of the Trinity, more than any other article of faith, accomplishes this because it, more than any other doctrine, refuses secularization. Firstly, because as Peterson notes, following Gregory of Nazianzus, "This conception of unity had no correspondence in the created order."[647] It does not follow that there is no analogizing to be done. The Nicene Fathers would never have drawn such a conclusion; the core terms of the doctrine are all analogies of some kind: light, generation, spiration, intellect, and will. But analogical predication, as the tradition reminds us, means an infinitely greater dissimilarity than it does similarity. Analogy is precisely *not* univocity.

St. Gregory, who first made this claim about the fundamental dissimilarity of the Trinity from any creature was certainly not ignorant of or opposed to trinitarian analogies. The reason why the psychological analogy is acceptable in a way that, say the "social doctrine" of the Trinity is not, is that the latter ignores the *analogia entis*. For the social trinitarians the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are persons in more or less the same

sense that a human being is a person. And this is simply not the case. For advocates of the psychological analogy, while their may be some *vestigia trinitatis* in the human soul, with its intellectual and volitional powers, no classical theologian would dare to say that God exercises his mental power in basically the same way as the human soul.

Trinitarian analogies provide an avenue for us to understand the holy mystery of God, but they do not serve as models for imitation. For example, many critics of classical theism are opposed to notions such as divine immutability, impassibility, or aseity, because they are under the false impression that these divine attributes are there for our imitation. But we are simply not what God is—and that's OK. We are not social beings because God is a social being. God is not a social being, neither are angels social beings. They are not interdependent; we are. And this dissimilarity is not a problem to be rectified. We neither need to construe God as social to conform to our image, nor do we need to reject our sociality to imitate God. God has made us to be social, in a way that he is not, and that is good.

The second reason why the doctrine of the Trinity can be said to refuse secularization, and therefore political theology, is because the Trinity is the most distinctive of all Christian proclamations. Another faith may be monotheistic, polytheistic, or atheistic. Only the Christian faith is trinitarian. Other faiths may believe in an immortal soul, in a resurrection from the dead, in eternal rewards and punishments, in priestly mediation, in divine incarnations, and so on. But no other faith can profess that there is one God in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for such a proclamation *is* the Christian faith itself. Profession of faith in the triune God is a summary of the entirety of Christian theology. Like a single cell of an organism that contains within it the DNA

blueprint for the entire body, so the doctrine of the Trinity, uniquely, has "encoded" within it the whole gospel. By virtue of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are incorporated into the Body of the Son, and thus we call God our Father. Theology, pneumatology, soteriology, Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology—they are all present by implication in the trinitarian formula.

Of course, by virtue of the systematic nature of theology, one may begin at any given doctrine and argue outward toward other doctrines. However, only in the Trinitarian formula is the entirety of the Christian proclamation uniquely summarized. Only here is the Christian's unique relation to God expounded. This is why prayers are offered and sacraments administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And this is why the traditional collect of the Mass always concludes with an acknowledgment of our intra-Trinitarian relation to God: "through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen."

The political significance of such a uniquely "unsecularizable" doctrine is a resistance to all merely secular power. Nothing whatsoever can "take the place" of God in the political realm. No monarch can speak with the voice of God, for God himself *is* a monarch, therefore all power is subject to him. Nor can one say, *vox populi, vox Dei*. The worship of the triune God requires the rejection of all nationalist idolatries. In the modern world the "nation" has taken the place of God as the transcendent locus of solidarity. The nation is, throughout the world, the *summum bonum*, and the object of Ultimate Concern. The nation is the political god of the modern world and for this reason alone faith in the triune god is incompatible with nationalism. Nationalism, in effect, is an expression of

collective self-worship, where the highest good of the nation is its own self-preservation. The community that gathers in worship of the triune God, that is, the Church, has as its highest good the love of God and neighbor.

Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity directs us away from nationalist ideology, not only in its particular quality of resisting merely secular power, but also in its intrinsic content. For to properly understand God as triune is to know that the human person is invited to supernaturally participate in the divine life, to know and love God, and secondarily to know and love all men and women who are made in his image. These two ends mean that the Christian Church and nation-state are two alternative, and often mutually exclusive, ways of living in community. At the very least, one must be subordinate to the other, and from a Christian perspective, one's identity as a citizen of the nation-state, and one's loyalty to the nation must be utterly relativized in the light of one's Christian identity and fidelity to the Church.

That being said, the central claim of this dissertation is that we must always be on guard against building political conclusions upon theological analogies. It is the perennial temptation of political theology to ask what meaning can be extracted, as it were, from theological concepts. But this is, more often than not, an abuse of theological integrity. So, for the reader who hopes to find specifically trinitarian analogies in a political program will not find it here.

What the doctrine of the Trinity points us to is the otherness of God and the mystery of human participation in his triune life. The Trinity, as explained in chapter four, summarizes the Christian proclamation: the habit of charity, sanctifying grace, the light of glory, and the Incarnation. It is not proper to draw out political analogies from

each of these created participations in the divine life, and develop a political program based upon "charity," in the abstract, or an "incarnational" model of democratic engagement. Such a conclusion to this work would be cheap and betray the central critique offered by Peterson of political theology. Rather what I have shown is that God, as Trinity, calls us to participate in his divine life and to glorify him as God.

Both the Church and nation-state are communities of worship and therefore also of sacrifice. Whereas the nation-state replenishes its sanctity by the blood of soldiers offered to the flag as a totem of the national deity, the Church offers the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sacrificial worship of the nation-state is predicated on the friend-enemy distinction. The sacrificial victims must venture out beyond the borders, to face the enemies, to kill and to be killed. The worship of the nation-state means war. The sacrifice of Christ, in total contrast, means peace. It is the sacrifice of reconciliation that makes into one Body those who were once enemies. The sacrificial violence of the nation-state reinstantiates borders, where the sacrifice of Christ tears them down.

> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility … that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end.[648]

The political significance of the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, is a call for the Church to take up its identity as truly public. This, of course, can be done by various means of direct action on the part of Christians, parishes, and dioceses. But the Church is no more political, no more public, than in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is the sacrificial offering that generates a new transnational community.

And the Mass is trinitarian in its very essence—not in any analogous or pragmatic sense, since, as has been shown the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be subjected to this sort of secularization. No, the Mass is trinitarian because it is truly the sacrifice of the Son, offered truly to the Father, by the power and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The question of what political action can flow from the doctrine of the Trinity has one definitive answer, and it is the public worship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, especially the Mass.

Of course this does not mean that mere attendance of Sunday Mass is sufficient political action. Rather, public worship is particularly necessary in forming a new communal identity and the identity of the Christian is uniquely formed in this way. In it the believer is truly united to the sacrificial Victim, Jesus Christ; in the Mass the believer presents his or her own body as a "living sacrifice to God."[649] That is why the sacrifice of Christ tears down the "dividing wall," because, on the Cross, the Lord has left us an example that "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."[650] The one who is united to the sacrifice of Christ, as one is at the Mass, is truly "crucified with Christ," as St. Paul said, "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."[651] We are therefore called to solidarity with the Crucified One, and thus with all of the crucified, all of those who occupy the "lowest" place, "outside the camp." The Mass calls us to serve the poor, not simply because the Lord commands it explicitly in the Gospel, but because on the Cross, in that act of self-sacrifice, which we witness and in which we participate, he embodies and invites us to solidarity with the least of these.

The liturgy, properly understood, is a public act of worship according to the laws of the Church. It is not collective self-worship, nor is it even an opportunity for collective

self-expression. The liturgy is a sacred moment of collective self-sacrifice as members, individually, through prayer and sacrament, join themselves to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. There they are turned outward, beyond the concerns of their own nation, and to the concern of the world's poor.

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[1] "Compelling as is liberation from various types of historical oppressions, contemporary theology must recover a contemplative vision of the ultimate and the whole and reintegrate its many partial and relative concerns into that vision. Without the centrality of God as the ultimate origin and end of all things and without a vision of all things *sub ratione Dei*, we simply have no 'theology,' the *logos* of and about *theos*; at best we have sociology in theological guise." Anselm Kyongsuk Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology after Postmodernism* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 158.
[2] Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory for a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa and Matteo Mandarini (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), xi.
[3] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 198.
[4] Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Turnbridge Wells, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1988), 3.
[5] Boff, 22.
[6] Miroslav Volf, "'The Trinity Is Our Social Program': The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Shape of Social Engagement," *Modern Theology* 14, no. 3 (1998): 412.
[7] Volf, 417.
[8] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005), 36.
[9] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (New York: Verso, 2006), 44–45.
[10] Research texts include: Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate* (Simon and Schuster, 2014); Gil Loescher, *Beyond Charity: International Cooperation and the Global Refugee Crisis* (Oxford University Press, 1993); Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (Haymarket Books, 2012); Gavin Kitching, *Seeking Social Justice Through Globalization: Escaping a Nationalist Perspective* (Penn State Press, 2010); Liah Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth* (Harvard University Press, 2009).
[11] Peterson, "Monotheism as Political Problem," in *Theological Tractates*.
[12] Ephesians 2:14. All biblical citations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition, 1966.
[13] D. Glenn Butner, Jr., "The Economic Trinity: On the Use of the Trinity in a Theology of Economics" (Evangelical Theological Society, November 17, 2015), www.academia.edu/18598320/The_Economic_Trinity_On_the_Use_of_the_Trinity_in_a_Theology_of_Economics.
[14] While the concern with Schmitt is not especially biographical it is worth acknowledging a few facts about Schmitt's personal and theological background. He is often identified as a Roman Catholic, but this is not at all a straightforward identification. He was certainly at odds with the Church personally: excommunicated in the mid-1920s for an irregular marriage to his second wife. It is also said that, "He took a permanent mistress and frequented the red-light districts of street prostitution in Berlin for several years beginning in 1928. Schmitt dissociated *eros* and *caritas* and did not ethicize sexuality through personal ties." The relevance of such a personal anecdote is that it

relates to his intellectual rejection of Catholic natural law ethics. He remained an opponent of the neo-Thomism of his era. Reinhard Mehring, "A 'Catholic Layman of German Nationality and Citizenship'?: Carl Schmitt and the Religiosity of Life," in *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*, ed. Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons (Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press, 2016), 78–80.

[15] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 36.

[16] Paul Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 3. Emphasis added.

[17] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 37.

[18] Schmitt, 5.

[19] "Because a general norm, as represented by an ordinary legal prescription, can never encompass a total exception, the decision that a real exception exists cannot therefore be entirely derived from this norm. … It is precisely the exception that makes relevant the subject of sovereignty, that is, the whole question of sovereignty. The precise details of an emergency cannot be anticipated, nor can one spell out what may take places in such a case, especially when it is truly a matter of an extreme emergency and of how it is to be eliminated." Schmitt, 6.

[20] Schmitt, 7.

[21] Schmitt, 36.

[22] First, a word about the meaning of secularization in Schmitt. Allow me to refer to Agamben's contrasting of a Schmittian versus a Weberian notion of secularization. For Schmitt, secularization does not mean that the theological is being eschewed, per se, but that it is being relocated and re-appropriated. The space of the sacred is simply moving, but it is not disappearing altogether. "Schmitt's strategy is, in a certain sense, the opposite of Weber's. While, for Weber, secularization was an aspect of the growing process of disenchantment and detheologization of the modern world, for Schmitt it shows on the contrary that, in modernity, theology continues to be present and active in an eminent way." Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 4.

[23] Much of my work in this section has been adapted from my previously published article: Shane Akerman, "Political Theology or Theological Politics; Paradox at the Heart of Democracy," *Claremont Journal of Religion* 2, no. 1 (2013): 114–40.

[24] *Summa Theologiae* I.2.3.

[25] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract,* bk. II, ch. 7, trans. G.D.H. Cole (Cosimo, Inc., 2008).

[26] Schmitt is a Catholic, the argument for the papal power, etc.

[27] Seyla Benhabib, "Deliberative Rationality and Models of Democratic Legitimacy," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical & Democratic Theory* 1, no. 1 (April 1994), 29-30; Honig, 20.

[28] Honig, 20.

[29] ". . . we can deny or disguise the paradox of politics only by suppressing or naturalizing the exclusion of those (elements of the) people whose residual, remaindered, minoritized existence might call the pure general will into question." Honig, 16.

[30] While today there is a tendency to see democracy and liberalism as virtually inseparable allies, "Schmitt saw himself as a classic democrat at war with liberalism's

enervating assault on all things political." Liberalism's excessive interest in freedoms and rights actually inhibit a fully democratic approach to politics. The will of the people is restricted by these external limits. And also, the very *identity* of the people is diffused by liberalisms tendency towards universalism; whereas Schmitt saw true a democratic society as necessarily homogenous. William Rasch, "Carl Schmitt's Defense of Democracy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*, ed. Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons (Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press, 2016), 315.

[31] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 37.

[32] Schmitt, 43.

[33] Those advocating a more naïve and causal construal of the relation between political and theological concepts will be examined further in Chapter Two.

[34] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 45.

[35] Schmitt, 45.

[36] Schmitt, 45.

[37] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*, trans. Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward (Malden, MA: Polity, 2008), 119.

[38] This is in stark contradiction to those who have attempted to read Carl Schmitt's political theology as latently Protestant. Anver M. Emon, "Beyond the Protestantism of Political Theology: Thinking the Politics of Theological Voluntarism," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 29, no. 2 (2016): 193. Schmitt even begins to acknowledge this when he writes: "Thomas Hobbes *brought the Reformation to a conclusion* by recognizing the state as a clear alternative to the Roman Catholic church's monopoly on decision-making." Schmitt, *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*, 126.

[39] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 39.

[40] Kahn, *Political Theology*, 153.

[41] Kahn, 154.

[42] Kahn, 155.

[43] Again, it is crucial to keep in mind the opposition of liberalism and democracy in Schmitt. The people find authentic "representation" through the sovereign, so that the dictator can be an expression of the will of the people (via "acclamation"). But this will always be at odds with liberalism—which appeals to an abstract "humanity," rather thank to the people (*Volk*) and imposes constitutional limitations upon the sovereign will. Rasch, "Carl Schmitt's Defense of Democracy," 328.

[44] This clarification of the nature of Schmitt's political theological project must be stated clearly, lest their be any confusion that Schmitt's political theological paradigm leads necessarily to totalitarian politics. Schmitt's membership and participation in the Nazi party beginning in May of 1933 is a shadow that hangs over all of his work. But to show that Schmitt's political writings, and especially his understanding of the relation between politics and theology, is not predetermined we may look to influence of Schmitt, even after 1933, on the Frankfurt School. Ellen Kennedy, "Carl Schmitt and the Frankfurt School," *Telos*, no. 71 (Spring 1987): 37–66.

[45] Kennedy, 44f.

[46] "Bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes dissimilar things comparable by reducing them to abstract quantities. For the Enlightenment, anything which cannot be

resolved into numbers, and ultimately into one, is illusion; modern positivism consigns it to poetry. Unity remains the watchword from Parmenides to Russell. All gods and qualities must be destroyed." Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 4–5.

[47] Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2007), 25.

[48] ". . . [T]he distinction between God and man is reduced to an irrelevance, as reason has steadfastly indicated since the earliest critique of Homer. In their mastery of nature, the creative God and the ordering mind are alike. Man's likeness to God consists in sovereignty over existence, in the lordly gaze, in the command." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 5–6.

[49] "Positivism, which finally did not shrink from laying hands on the idlest fancy of all, thought itself, eliminated the last intervening agency between individual action and the social norm." Horkheimer and Adorno, 23.

[50] Horkheimer and Adorno, 21.

[51] Alain Badiou, "St. Paul, Founder of the Universal Subject," in *St. Paul among the Philosophers*, ed. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 27.

[52] Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London ; New York: Verso, 2012), 41; Alain Badiou, *Logiques Des Mondes* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), 9.

[53] Badiou, "St. Paul, Founder of the Universal Subject," 29.

[54] Badiou, 29.

[55] 1 Corinthians 1:22.

[56] Romans 10:12.

[57] Badiou, 32.

[58] Badiou, 28.

[59] Badiou, 36.

[60] Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, 75.

[61] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, Expanded Edition (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007), 26.

[62] Schmitt, 35.

[63] Schmitt, 35.

[64] Schmitt, 27.

[65] Schmitt, *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*, 125.

[66] Schmitt, 125.

[67] Schmitt, 127.

[68] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 1.

[69] Agamben, 17.

[70] Agamben, 17.

[71] Agamben, 3.

[72] Agamben, 66.

[73] Agamben, 24.

[74] Agamben, 25.

[75] Joshua W. Jipp, *Christ Is King: Paul's Royal Ideology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).
[76] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 21–22.
[77] Agamben, 51.
[78] Agamben, 54.
[79] Agamben, 56.
[80] Agamben, 57.
[81] *ST* I.19.1.
[82] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 58.
[83] Agamben, 59.
[84] Agamben, 59.
[85] Augustine, *De Trinitate* XV.23.43.
[86] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 87.
[87] Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 4, 12, 23, p. 354. Cited in Agamben, 90.
[88] Agamben, 100–101.
[89] Agamben, 101.
[90] "Now God shall be glorified in his handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modeled after, his own Son. For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man … was made in the likeness of God" Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.6.1
[91] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 111.
[92] Agamben, 114.
[93] Agamben, 132.
[94] *ST* I 103.1.3 Cited in Agamben, 132.
[95] For a description of the complex relationship between Islamic voluntarism and Schmitt's *Political Theology*, see: Emon, "Beyond the Protestantism of Political Theology: Thinking the Politics of Theological Voluntarism," 202.
[96] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 118.
[97] Agamben, 135.
[98] Agamben, 138.
[99] Agamben, 139.
[100] Furthermore, the Trinitarian theological paradigm is expressed in our time by the dichotomization of governmental power and the world which is governed. As an example of this, Agamben makes reference to the United States' interventionist policies of supporting military coups to take down democratically elected governments, whether it be understood as occupation or liberation, the point is "a country … is being governed by remaining completely extraneous to it." This extraneousness of power is, according to Agamben, rooted in the Christian notion of the triune God, for whom the world is something to be managed (*qua* Son) yet at the same time God remains totally unaffected by the world (*qua* Father). What the Gnostics portrayed as simply two deities, the

Christians held together in the triune God who is both Creator and Savior of the world, transcendent and immanent. Agamben, 140.

[101] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute: Or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?*, Second Edition edition (London: Verso, 2009), 106.

[102] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 153.

[103] Agamben, 153f.

[104] The Church Fathers begin their understanding of angelic functions by reading from the prophet Daniel: "Thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9-10

[105] *ST* I 108.7.3

[106] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 160.

[107] Agamben, 162.

[108] Agamben, 164.

[109] Agamben, 166.

[110] John 17:1-5. Cf., Agamben, 201.

[111] Agamben, 139.

[112] John 17:22.

[113] The proliferation of late night comedy programs that double as political news, and even the success of the Trump presidential campaign, speak to the power of acclamation in the modern political process. "What is in question is nothing less than a new and unheard of concentration, multiplication, and dissemination of the function of glory as the center of the political system. … Contemporary democracy is a democracy that is entirely founded upon glory, that is, on the efficacy of acclamation, multiplied and disseminated by the media beyond all acclamation." Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 256.

[114] "In other words, democracy may not be a perversion or repression of political theology (of sovereignty, as Schmitt would have it), but simply a new iteration of the same political theology (of economy always already paired with sovereignty) that perdures in the West." Lloyd, 4.

[115] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 111; Butner, Jr., "The Economic Trinity: On the Use of the Trinity in a Theology of Economics."

[116] Cyril teaches that the Son is *anarchos* (unoriginated) in the sense of 'having no beinning in time.' But the Father alone is *anarchos* in the sense of having absolutely no origin. 'The Father is the beginning of the Son, himself without beginning,' i.e., the *arche anarchos*." Cyril of Jerusalem, General Introduction, 38. Cf. Catechetical Lectures 11.20.

[117] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 139.

[118] Agamben, 139.

[119] Rather than a political reading of the doctrine of the Trinity, Agamben's work may better be categorized as a Schmittian political Christology. But here again his merit in Christology is severely lacking because of his fatal misreadings of the Arian controversy.
[120] I side against Heinrich Meier's reading of Carl Schmitt. I have no real interest in Carl Schmitt's personal theological convictions, because it seems to me rather obvious that Carl Schmitt's political theological *method* does not rely at all on the personal faith of the practitioner of the method. The early Schmitt (1923) may have seen an essential dependence of his ideas upon Roman Catholicism, but the later Schmitt severs the necessity of this relationship. (And this after his formal excommunication from the Church in 1925-26.) Schmitt's work invokes the importance of "faith" and "revelation." But these should be read as concepts that hold the relative position of faith or revelation within a structure of ideas—not to an actual supernatural gift of faith or divine self-disclosure. Gavin Rae, "The Theology of Carl Schmitt's Political Theology," *Political Theology* 17, no. 6 (November 2016): 555, 561; Heinrich Meier, *The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: Four Chapters on the Distinction between Political Theology and Political Philosophy*, trans. Marcus Brainard, Expanded Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), xi, 43.
[121] Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, 287.
[122] Matthias Lievens, "Theology without God: Carl Schmitt's Profane Concept of the Political," *Bijdragen* 72, no. 4 (2011): 408–31.
[123] "Paralelling this democratization of the church was the rise of a new political theology. This was pioneered by Johann Baptist Metz, a student of Karl Rahner, who redefined the public role of theology in terms of providing a critique of society." Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, "Editors' Introduction," in *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*, by Carl Schmitt (Malden, MA: Polity, 2008), 18.
[124] These categories are to be explored in further detail in chapter three.
[125] An advancement of my own proposal for trinitarian theology is found in chapter four.
[126] "Properly speaking, the so-called fundamental hermeneutic problem of theology is not the problem of how systematic theology stands in relation to historical theology, how dogma stands in relation to history, but what is the relation between theory and practice, between understanding the faith and social practice." Johannes Baptist Metz, *Theology of the World*, trans. William Glen-Doepel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 112.
[127] Schmitt cites Hans Maier as referring to "the new political theology [as] just a secularised and dialectical version of the old one." Schmitt, *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*, 50.
[128] Michael Ludwig Stemmeler, "Theology of Liberation and Political Theology: Leonardo Boff and Gustavo Gutierrez in Conversation with Johann Baptist Metz and Juergen Moltmann" (Temple University, 1990), 73.
[129] Stemmeler, 98.
[130] Stemmeler, 109.
[131] Stemmeler, 120.
[132] Stemmeler, 121.

[133] Stemmeler, 126. This specific comment was made in regards to a divergence between Moltmann and Metz, but I believe the sentiment expressed holds for many of the apparent dissimilarities between so-called "liberation" and "political" theologies.
[134] Metz, *Theology of the World*, 110.
[135] Metz, 107.
[136] J. Matthew Ashley, "Johann Baptist Metz," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 252.
[137] Metz, *Theology of the World*, 114.
[138] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 46.
[139] Bonnie Honig, *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy*, Reprint (Princeton University Press, 2011), 94.
[140] Honig, 95.
[141] As Rosenzweig put it, an intervention into the established order by God cannot be a sign of God's perfection. The truly perfect creation would be the one that requires no intervention at all. Honig, 96.
[142] ". . . it was not the miracle's rupture of divine and natural order that as an event recemented the people's relation to god [sic] by revealing him in all his power to them. It was rather that the event followed a certain arc: It was predicted, prophesied, and the event then occurred." Honig, 97.
[143] Honig, 110. Cf., Talmud, Bava Metzia 59b.
[144] Honig, 110.
[145] Talmud, Bava Metzia 59b.
[146] Honig, 111.
[147] Honig, *Emergency Politics*, 107.
[148] Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 37.
[149] Schmitt, 37.
[150] Regina M. Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 33.
[151] "Memory constructs identity," according to Schwartz. And so, in order to best understand how the Bible models identity construction we must know how it employs memory itself. Memory and Scripture have a complex and intertwined relationship. On one hand the Bible discusses memory directly (remember the Sabbath, remember the Exodus. . .). On the other hand, the Bible is, in itself, a sort of catalog of memories. Canonization, the process by which certain texts become established as normative and authoritative, over against other documents, is a process of selecting and favoring certain memories. Implicitly, certain memories are rejected and forgotten. This is, of course, problematic for Schwartz's desire for openness and plurality. "In the end," she writes, "efforts to fix memories violate the past rather than pay homage to it." Schwartz, 143–45.
[152] Schwartz, 165.
[153] Schwartz, 162.
[154] Schwartz, 173.
[155] Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 2.

[156] Stemmeler, "Theology of Liberation and Political Theology: Leonardo Boff and Gustavo Gutierrez in Conversation with Johann Baptist Metz and Juergen Moltmann," 100.
[157] Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism*, 3.
[158] Crockett, 11.
[159] Catherine Keller, *The Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Laurel Schneider, *Beyond Monotheism: A Theology of Multiplicity* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
[160] Slavoj Žižek, "Dialectical Clarity Versus the Misty Conceit of Paradox," in *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?*, by Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, ed. Creston Davis, Short Circuits (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2009), 208.
[161] Žižek, 287.
[162] Sarahana, "Slavoj Zizek Speaks at Occupy Wall Street: Transcript," *Impose* (blog), October 10, 2011, http://www.imposemagazine.com/bytes/slavoj-zizek-at-occupy-wall-street-transcript.
[163] Sarahana.
[164] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?*, 2nd ed., The Essential Žižek (London ; New York: Verso, 2008), xxxix.
[165] Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity," *New Blackfriars* 81, no. 956 (October 2000): 432f.
[166] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 4.
[167] Moltmann, 21.
[168] Moltmann, 22.
[169] Moltmann, 23.
[170] Moltmann, 99.
[171] Moltmann, 25.
[172] Moltmann, 27.
[173] Moltmann, 33.
[174] Moltmann, 55.
[175] Moltmann, 57.
[176] Moltmann, 58.
[177] Moltmann, 59.
[178] Moltmann, 60.
[179] Moltmann, 19.
[180] Moltmann, 95.
[181] Moltmann, 96.
[182] Moltmann, 149–50.
[183] Moltmann, 117.
[184] Moltmann, 121.
[185] Moltmann, 121.
[186] Moltmann, 64.
[187] Moltmann, 191–92.
[188] Moltmann, 201. There is, here, an apparent lack of self-awareness that the sort of formula that Moltmann in parodying is, in fact, entirely biblical. Ironically it is in the

context of arguing for the need for legitimate authority in maintaining church unity: "Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4:3-6

[189] Moltmann, 198.

[190] In Thomistic thinking, analogical predication of being refers to the different ways in which God and creatures relate to being, or existence. To predicate existence of God and of creatures *univocally* would be to say that God and creatures exist in the same sort of way. To predicate existence *equivocally*, would be to say that they exist in an entirely unrelated sort of way. However, the Thomist will claim that God's existence and creaturely existence are *analogically* related. To put it simply, creatures "have" their existence, whereas God "is" his own existence. This understanding is therefore strongly opposed to those conceptions of God that would reduce God to the level of a mere being, as one who simply "exists," rather than the one who is existence itself.

[191] Moltmann, 174.

[192] Paul L. Gavrilyuk, "God's Impassible Suffering in the Flesh: The Promise of Paradoxical Christology," in *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*, ed. James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 138.

[193] Anselm Min, "Why Only an Immutable God Can Love, Relate, and Suffer," *University of Notre Dame Press* (Unpublished), no. Festschrift for Prof. Stephen Davis (2011): 13. "I feel pain in myself when I see my son bleeding on a cement floor, but I cannot feel his pain in the same way and to the same degree that he feels pain. I offer condolences to friends whose loved ones passed away, but I cannot share in the same intensity, same tonality, and same complexity of their sorrow, something we admit only indirectly by the very awkwardness we feel when we exchange condolences at funerals, a sure sign of the persisting otherness and lack of total internality and union which we may crave but cannot achieve."

[194] *ST* I, q. 43, a. 3. Emphasis mine.

[195] Min, "Why Only an Immutable God Can Love, Relate, and Suffer," 20.

[196] Gavrilyuk, "God's Impassible Suffering in the Flesh: The Promise of Paradoxical Christology," 147.

[197] Furthermore, by attributing suffering and pain directly to the eternal God, then the modern passibilists, like Moltmann, have unwittingly projected evil into eternity. This must be rejected, for "Christian martyrs certainly did not suffer atrocious pain in this life so that they could go on enduring the same pain with God for all eternity. This would be a nightmare." Gavrilyuk, 146.

[198] Min, "Why Only an Immutable God Can Love, Relate, and Suffer," 11.

[199] Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 11.

[200] Boff, 11.

[201] Boff, 119.

[202] Boff, 1.

[203] Boff, 2.

[204] Boff, 111.

[205] Boff, 2–3.
[206] Boff, 10.
[207] Boff, 7.
[208] Boff, 7.
[209] Boff, 8.
[210] What does Boff mean by Person? He intends to go beyond Bonaventure's and Aquinas' answer that a person is an "individual substance of a rational nature." But he adds far more that can create some problematic consequences. A person, says Boff, is a "centre of autonomy," and thus the three divine Persons are "three intelligent and free subjects." Boff, 115f.
[211] Boff, 152. However, Boff also experiments with other political analogies drawn from the doctrine of the Trinity. Each divine Person, in isolation, stands for a political perspective taken to an extreme: the Father alone is domination; the Son alone is a pseudo-democratic cult of personality, such as we find in fascist regimes and communist dictatorships; and the Spirit alone is anarchy. True human society, as God intended, always acknowledges the need for the simultaneous maintenance of relationships upward, outward, and inward. Boff, 15
[212] Boff, 20.
[213] Boff, 22.
[214] J. Kameron Carter, "On 'the Global' in Global Civil Society: Towards a Theological Archaeology of the Present," in *A World for All? Global Civil Society in Political Theory and Trinitarian Theology*, ed. William F. Storrar, Peter J. Casarella, and Paul Louis Metzger (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2011), 319ff.
[215] Jürgen Moltmann, "Inviting Unity," *Concilium*, no. 177 (1985): 50–58; Boff, *Trinity and Society*, 151.
[216] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, Sacra Doctrina (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998), 192.
[217] Volf, 192.
[218] Volf, 194.
[219] Volf, 203.
[220] Volf, 203.
[221] Volf, 205.
[222] Volf, "'The Trinity Is Our Social Program,'" 408.
[223] Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 206.
[224] Uniquely, in his concluding remarks in the essay, "The Trinity Is Our Social Program" make it clear that ultimately we are called to reflect back to God, "not so much the circular movement of the divine love" by the "downward," and "one-sided" love that we see expressed on the Cross. We too should love unreservedly and without expectation of reciprocation. Then on the Last Day we can be drawn up into the never-ending circle of intra-divine love. To such a mild conclusion, no one could object! But having spent so many pages establishing the social relations within the Trinity, he arrives at a conclusion that doesn't depend on such a social analogy for the Trinity. The argument in the article, published in the same year as *After Our Likeness*, I find far less objectionable. Volf, "'The Trinity Is Our Social Program,'" 417.

[225] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008), 58, 161, 317.
[226] "First, a concept, perichoresis, is used to name what is not understood, to name whatever it is that makes the three Persons one. Secondly, the concept is filled out rather suggestively with notions borrowed from our own experience of relationships and relatedness. And then, finally, it is presented as an exciting resource Christian theology has to offer the wider world in its reflections upon relationships and relatedness." Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity," 442.
[227] "Because feminism identifies interrelatedness and mutuality - equal, respectful and nurturing relationships - as the basis of the world as it really is and as it ought to be, we can find no better understanding and image of the divine than that of the perfect and open relationships of love." Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 127.
[228] Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity," 437.
[229] Kilby, 440.
[230] Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2019), 3.
[231] *ST* I-1.8.
[232] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, 25th Anniversary Edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 2.
[233] Lindbeck, 2.
[234] Lindbeck, 66.
[235] Romans 10:9.
[236] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed (Oxford, UK ; Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 401.
[237] Colossians 1:17.
[238] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed (Oxford, UK ; Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 390.
[239] Here the metaphysical concern becomes primary: Is violence absolute, meaning peace is its privation? Or is peace absolute, making violence *its* privation?
[240] On this point Milbank is able to take Alasdair MacIntyre's work to its end. MacIntyre made the dichotomy clear, in his terms: Aristotle or Nietzsche. But MacIntyre is found unable to make the call for a full-fledged revival of Aristotelianism. Milbank, in some sense, takes up this task.
[241] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 2006, xvii.
[242] Milbank, xvii.
[243] This more balanced approach to the nature of theology serves as a protection against the theological abuses described in chapter two. For there one can see the fruitlessness of those who want to tinker and experiment with theological ideas without themselves having any epistemic (or *pistic*) commitments.
[244] Kahn, *Political Theology*, 3.
[245] Kahn, 99f.
[246] And we must certainly go beyond Agamben's related method, which is fixated on the history of words as a model of understanding Schmitt's secularization thesis. Adam

Kotsko, "Genealogy and Political Theology: On Method in Agamben's The Kingdom and the Glory," *Political Theology* 14, no. 1 (2013): 108f.
[247] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 54ff.
[248] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 62.
[249] Augustine, *City of God*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Marcus Dods, vol. 2, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1887), Book X, Ch. 1.
[250] Some have sought to resolve the problem of the ambiguous definition of religion by employing a "family resemblance" definition. This means that while there is not one single characteristic that all religions share, religions instead possess some of the many characteristics that are common to it. But, as William Cavanaugh points out, the family resemblance method of definition only works if there is a central family member from which we can identify as most fully "religion." For if something can be vaguely, or distantly religious, then there must be something that is distinctly and proximately religious. In that case, it is clear that Protestant Christianity is the central member. The further one gets from the Protestant model, the less it becomes really "a religion." What gets included and what gets excluded under the term religion depends on how closely it resembles a certain kind of Protestant Christianity. Because Protestant Christianity has tended toward the individual and the "private," then religion as a whole is constructed as a domain outside of the public, or political, sphere.
[251] Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.
[252] Fitzgerald, 7.
[253] There is what Fitzgerald would call the 'common sense' view of religion: belief in god(s) or the supernatural. The problem that Fitzgerald (and others) raise against this common sense notion is not that one cannot find *something* to call 'transcendent' in most if not all cultures but it becomes virtually impossible to draw the line between the religious and the non-religious with any precision. Is Marxist teleology a religious doctrine of eschatology? Is the 'invisible hand' of the market a theological claim? Is Fenway Park a sacred place? Is the US Constitution a sacred text? This is what Fitzgerald refers to as the "intractable problems of marginality." Fitzgerald, 7.
[254] William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford University, 2009), 8.
[255] Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies*, 15.
[256] Fitzgerald, 15.
[257] Fitzgerald, 29.
[258] This strategic adoption of such terms is analogous to Segundo's distinction between "faith" and "ideology." Where "faith" refers to "an absolutely universal dimension of the human being." According to Segundo, "faith starts off by teaching us which value is the one to which we can 'entrust' our whole life; but then we also have to structure the rest of it." So, while "faith" is the primordial system of values that we adopt, "ideology" is the strategic choice of a way of living that will attain the goals provided by faith. Marxism, liberalism, Nazism, etc., then are not ideologies in Segundo's sense, but faiths. Juan Luis

Segundo, *Faith and Ideologies*, trans. John Drury (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1984), 7–8, 31.
[259] Asma T. Uddin, *When Islam Is Not a Religion: Inside America's Fight for Religious Freedom* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2019).
[260] Stanley Hauerwas, "Hauerwas on 'Hauerwas and the Law': Trying to Have Something to Say," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 75, no. 4 (2012): 250.
[261] William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 1.
[262] Cavanaugh, 3.
[263] As recently as 2005, Boff's work is hailed as "the most sophisticated attempt to bring the social sciences into dialogue with theology." Neil Ormerod, "A Dialectic Engagement with the Social Sciences in an Ecclesiological Context," *Theological Studies* 66, no. 4 (December 2005): 833.
[264] Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987), xxv.
[265] This hylomorphic understanding of the relationship between theology and social sciences in political theology is crucial, because the "relation is not an extrinsic relation of 'application' between two separate things but one of 'constitution.'" Anselm Min, *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 60.
[266] Diagram 1: Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 73. Diagram 2: Boff, 83.
[267] Boff, 5.
[268] Boff, 21.
[269] Boff, 26.
[270] Segundo describes these problems in his own terms as "faith without ideology," and "ideology without faith." By the former, he refers, with a great deal of dissatisfaction to those Christians who believe that Christianity needs no mediating theory of social action. This, he says, is the equivalent of what St. James called a dead faith, without works. On the other hand, many Marxists falsely believe that on the basis of reason and science one can eschew all need for faith. The skeptical impulse to abolish all faith itself becomes reified, idolized, and absolutized—indeed, it becomes itself a new faith. So, in order to avoid this extreme, we must recognize the constant human need of faith. Segundo's proposal, therefore, is that faith and ideology must remain in constant dialectical tension. Segundo, *Faith and Ideologies*, 120–34.
[271] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 23.
[272] Boff, 22.
[273] Boff, 38.
[274] Boff, 39.
[275] Boff, 58.
[276] Boff, 67.
[277] Boff, 68.
[278] Boff, 81.
[279] Boff, 69.
[280] Boff, 93.

[281] The sense of the faithful. "The whole body of the faithful. . . cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (sensus fidei) on the part of the whole people, when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 92.
[282] Min describes theology as "a critical reflection on a three-dimensional dialectic . . . among the pastoral praxis of the church as an institutional body, especially the episcopate; the political praxis of the activist Christian elite; and the praxis of the poor, the believing masses, or people in their totality." Indeed, a living, dynamic, and orthodox theology will always find itself within the bounds of these three poles: the traditional faith of the Magisterium, the historically-conscious faith of the engaged academic, and the faith of the people. Min, *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation*, 56.
[283] Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni patris*, 24.
[284] In it he cites Pope Innocent VI, saying of St. Thomas: "His teaching above that of others, the canonical writings alone excepted, enjoys such a precision of language, an order of matters, a truth of conclusions, that those who hold to it are never found swerving from the path of truth, and he who dare assail it will always be suspected of error." *Aeterni patris*, 21.
[285] With Min, "I do not mean to plead for a precritical return to the thirteenth century, which no person with a modern historical and critical consciousness could do, but to argue for a postcritical retrieval of certain insights a truly classical thinker might still have for later generations increasingly tired with their own preoccupations and provincialisms." Anselm Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter between Aquinas and Recent Theologies* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 2.
[286] Philip A. Egan, "John Henry Newman and Bernard Lonergan: A Note on the Development of Christian Doctrine," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63, no. 4 (2007): 1108 n. 16.
[287] John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), 171.

The first criterion, the preservation of type was articulated forcefully by Pope Pius IX in 1854, writing that dogmas must "retain their full, integral, and proper nature, and will grow only within their own genus - that is, within the same dogma, in the same sense and the same meaning." (See *Ineffabilis deus.*) In other words, the development of a doctrine cannot include its alteration of the central content of the doctrine, nor even the "shifting" of its sense. "[Y]oung birds do not grow into fishes, nor does the child degenerate into the brute, wild or domestic, of which he is by inheritance lord." Newman, 172.

The second criterion: "A development, to be faithful, must retain both the doctrine and the principle with which it started." Newman, 181. By this Newman draws our attention the underlying theological principles that any heresy, to be heresy, must betray. For someone who has the right principles, he says, but holds the wrong doctrines is merely ignorant. Protestantism, for instance, is "doctrine … without active principle," as evidenced by the freewheeling use of terms like "schism" and "heresy" to which Protestants "attach no definite meaning." Newman, 182.

The third criterion is the power of assimilation. This we might likewise call explanatory scope. An authentic doctrinal development will continue to prove fruitful, and allow for a greater incorporation of information *within the tradition*. A corruption will lead to fracturing from within as doctrines begin to diverge one from another. Legitimate development, on the other hand, produces a converging effect, as the unity between ideas is all the more strengthened and new information more readily synthesized.

The fourth criterion Newman calls logical sequence. A brilliant example of the importance of being attuned to the logical progression of ideas is the condemnation of Origen. During his own life, Origen was of the highest reputation within the Church, "his immediate pupils were saints and rulers in the Church; he has the praise of St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzen, and furnishes materials to St. Ambrose and St. Hilary." 194 However, some three centuries later he was condemned. Why? Because "a definite heterodoxy was the growing result of his theology." Newman, 194.

Fifthly and sixthly, Newman remarks that legitimate doctrinal development includes "anticipations of the future" and a "conservative action upon the past." By this he refers to the almost providential continuity of ideas over time. Later developments will find in the resources of the past almost proleptic appearances of the same notion. What is now being expressed after thoughtful and rigorous debate was likely already confessed by some ancient saint by a kind of intuition. Likewise, doctrinal development must always maintain a conservative impulse with respect to the past. As he cites Pope St. Leo, "To be seeking for what has been disclosed, to reconsider what has been finished, to tear up what has been laid down, what is this but to he unthankful for what is gained?" Newman, 201.

And lastly, legitimate doctrinal development maintains a "chronic vigor." This refers to the staying power of good and healthy developments within the tradition and the transitory character of heresies. This is an especially valuable criterion for considering contemporary theological movements that rise and fall quickly like the changing of seasons. The theologian should take no interest in passing fads, but rather contribute to the building up of a perennial tradition that is much older than we are and will long outlive us.

[288] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 95.
[289] Boff, 93.
[290] Boff, 100.
[291] Boff, 101.
[292] "I shall therefore qualify as 'idealistic' or 'logocentric' the theological conception that establishes a bond of dependency between salvation and revelation (or faith)." Boff, 106.
[293] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 99.
[294] Boff, 119.
[295] Boff, 121.
[296] Boff appeals to the parable of the sheep and the goats, wherein those who are rewarded for feeding and clothing the Son of Man did so without knowing whom it was that they were serving. Boff, 101.
[297] This is in contrast to Gutiérrez's construal of liberation and salvation. According to this view, God invites human participation in creation and in salvation in such a radical way that historical progress, i.e. liberation, is a constitutive part of God's saving work.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, ed. John Eagleson, trans. Caridad Inda, 15th Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 90–91.
[298] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 97.
[299] Boff, 95–97.
[300] Boff, 97.
[301] Hebrews 11:6.
[302] Romans 1:19-21; 2:14-16.
[303] Boff, 100.
[304] It should not come as a surprise that the content of this theology of liberation found in Boff concerns his account of salvation. For it is precisely on this point that the critiques of John Paul II and then-Cardinal Ratzinger found greatest issue with Latin American liberation theology. Min, *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation*, 122.
[305] Boff even says, somewhat surprisingly that, "There is no such thing as a *Christian* practice as such, a practice with the name 'Christian' written on its forehead as constituting its particular essence. What really exists is a practice *inspired* by faith and *interpreted* as being 'Christian,' or 'supernatural,' or 'salvific.'" Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 104.
[306] Augustine, *De Trinitate* X 1-2; Thomas Aquinas, *ST* II-I, 27.2.
[307] Karl Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994), 47.
[308] Karl Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," in *Theological Investigations*, trans. Kevin Smyth, vol. 4 (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 42.
[309] Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, 51; Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," 50.
[310] Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," 50.
[311] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1978), 185.
[312] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 2006, 232.
[313] "If integralism means 'the supernaturalizing of the natural', then, on a practical level, there can be no true justice without charity, and no true social order without transformation by the supernatural society which is the Church. On the theoretical level, secular theories of society can be, at best, tentative, and their conclusions remain subject to revision and correction by theology." Milbank, 225.
[314] Milbank, 252.
[315] Milbank, 251.
[316] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 106.
[317] Boff, 107.
[318] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 2006, 251.
[319] Milbank, 253.
[320] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 88.
[321] Neil Ormerod makes a similar critique of Boff's methodology. Just as Aquinas supplements and ultimately transforms Aristotle's works, rather than treating them as independent and objective science, so too the contemporary theologian must sublate the social sciences. Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishing, 2014), 54.

[322] "Grace perfects nature both in the sense that it adds a perfection beyond nature and in the sense that it confers on nature the effective freedom to attain its own perfection. But grace is not a substitute for nature, and theology is not a substitute for empirical human science." Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E Crowe and Robert M. Doran, 5th ed., vol. 3, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 767.
[323] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 33.
[324] It is especially worth noting that the later Clodovis Boff, unlike his brother Leonardo, whom I critiqued the previous chapter, has acknowledged precisely this danger. We constantly face the threat that, "The 'pastoral action of liberation' becomes one of the many branches of the 'popular movement'. The Church becomes like an NGO, and so also loses substance physically: it loses workers, militants, and faithful. Those 'on the outside' feel little attraction for a 'Church of liberation', because the militants already have NGOs, while for religious experience they need much more than simple social liberation. Moreover, because of the failure to perceive the social extent and relevance of the current spiritual malaise, liberation theology shows itself to be culturally myopic and historically anachronistic, or alienated from its time." As quoted by Sandro Magister, "Clodovis and Leonardo Boff, Separated Brethren," *Chiesa* (blog), July 14, 2008, http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/205773bdc4.html?eng=y.
[325] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 142f.

A more nuanced, but still insufficient approach, is what Boff describes as a Correspondence of Terms Model. Accounting for the contextual differences between the world of Scripture and our own political moment, the Correspondence of Terms Model, recognizes that one cannot be immediately applied to the other. So there is a kind of translational work being done where biblical figures are like archetypes that can be read as equivalent to modern day political characters. Israel stands for the oppressed; the Romans are the more abstract power of 'Empire' as such, or of capitalism. Sadducees might be said to represent corrupt and compromised religious systems. And the words and actions of Jesus are paradigmatic for today's revolutionary figure.

This model can be applied by almost political ideology. If Jesus is determined to be a pacifist, then we ought also to be pacifists; on the other hand, those who believe Jesus to be a Zealot, or a radical, would find justification for a more radical, even violent, political option. But, again, this model lacks sufficient subtlety. To draw a parallel between ourselves and Jesus is unwarranted without adequate analysis of both the political context of his time and of ours.

In place of this Correspondence of Terms Model, Boff offers the "Correspondence of Relationship" Model. The parallel to be found is not between ourselves and Jesus, or Rome and America, per se, but rather a more discerning look at the nature or disposition of the *relation* between Jesus and Rome. "An identity of senses, then, is not to be sought on the level of context, nor consequently, on the level of the message as such—but rather on the level of the *relationship* between context and message on each side respectively." Boff, 143-149.
[326] Boff, 217.
[327] "The result of misguided attempts such as those suggested by $B^1 \rightarrow A$ and $A^1 \rightarrow B$ diagonals is that, on the one hand, the 'theologians' are isolated from the community of

faith because they make theological claims that carry no weight since there is no 'praxis substance' to them, and on the other hand Christians are confused and disoriented, their faith being unable to energize their praxis." José Míguez Bonino, *Toward a Christian Political Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 49.

[328] Boff, 218f.

[329] Boff, 218.

[330] Peter Drilling, "The Psychological Analogy of the Trinity: Augustine, Aquinas, and Lonergan," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 71, no. 3–4 (August 1, 2006): 320–37.

[331] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Marcus Dods and George Reith, vol. 1, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1885).

[332] Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Marcus Dods, vol. 2, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1885), Book II, chap. 10.

[333] Origen, *De Principiis*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Frederick Crombie, vol. 4, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1885), Book I, Ch. 2.6.

[334] Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. Peter Holmes, vol. 3, Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1885), Ch. 5.

[335] Tertullian, 3:Ch. 5.

[336] John Henry Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), 156f.

[337] Athanasius, *De Synodis*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. John Henry Newman and Archibald Robertson, vol. 4, Ante-Nicene Fathers 2 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1892), 41.

[338] Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, 160.

[339] Newman, 171.

[340] Newman, 202f.

[341] Ormerod offers this wonderful analogy. The difference between Augustine and the later Aquinas "is like the difference between chemistry before and after the discovery of the periodic table of elements by Mendeleev during the 1860s. Before that time, chemistry was a series of unrelated insights seeking cohesion within a unified view. After the discovery of the periodic table, the science of chemistry began in earnest. It became the key for the complete systematisation of chemistry." The periodic table, of course, is the psychological analogy itself. Thus Aquinas is able to *begin* with a premise that Augustine only at last finds after many various proposals. Neil Ormerod, "The Psychological Analogy for the Trinity: At Odds with Modernity," *Pacifica* 14, no. 3 (October 2001): 282.

[342] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, 2nd ed. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), Book X, Ch. 4.18.

[343] 2 Peter 1:4.

[344] Augustine, Book XIV, Ch. 5, 19.25.

[345] Augustine, Book XIV, Ch. 5, 19.25.

[346] *ST* Prima Pars.

[347] Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The "Divine Science" of the Summa Theologiae* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 69.
[348] te Velde, 71.
[349] Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter between Aquinas and Recent Theologies*, 169.
[350] te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The "Divine Science" of the Summa Theologiae*, 68f.
[351] "[Thomas'] practice in the *Summa Theologiae* is to explain the secondary reality (our salvation) from the primary reality (the divinity of the Son and the Spirit). . . . But his biblical commentaries, in close contact with his patristic sources, also follow the opposite order: Thomas establishes the primary reality (the divinity of the persons) *on the basis of* the secondary reality (our salvation). . . . Here he follows the order in which we discover the mystery: the action of the persons in the economy leads to the discovery and disclosure of a truth concerning the Trinity itself." Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13.
[352] *ST* I 32.1.3.
[353] Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter between Aquinas and Recent Theologies*, 171.
[354] *ST* I 23.1.
[355] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 25–26.
[356] "[A] person participating in the word of God becomes god by participation. But a thing does not become this or that by participation unless it participates in what is this or that by its essence. . . Therefore, one does not become god by participation unless he participates in what is God by essence. Therefore, the Word of God, that is the Son, by participation in whom we becomes gods, is God by essence." *In Ioan.* 10.35 (no. 1460).
[357] *In Ioan*. 10.35 (no. 1460).
[358] *ST* I 27.1.
[359] *ST* I 28.1.
[360] Anselm K. Min, "God as the Mystery of Sharing and Shared Love: Thomas Aquinas on the Trinity," in *The Cambridge Companion to The Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 90.
[361] It is very important to note, therefore, that what subsists in God are in fact the *relations* of the three Persons, of which there are four: paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration.
[362] Boethius, *The Trinity is One God not Three Gods*, chs. 5-6. As quoted in Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 83.
[363] *ST* I 28.4.
[364] *ST* I 27.1.
[365] *ST* I 27.1.2. "Whatever proceeds within (*ad intra*) by an intellectual process is not necessarily diverse; to the contrary, the more perfect the procession is, the more closely it is one with that from which it proceeds. For it is clear that the more a thing is known, the greater the intimacy of its intellectual conception with the one who knows it; and the more it is one with him; because the intellect by the very act of knowing, becomes one with the known. Thus, since the divine intellect is the summit of all perfection . . . it is

necessary that the divine Word be perfectly one with him from whom he proceeds, without the least diversity."
[366] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 60.
[367] *ST* I 27.2.
[368] *SCG* IV, ch. 19 (no. 3560).
[369] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 66.
[370] *ST* I 27.3.3.
[371] *ST* I 28.3.
[372] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 98.
[373] *SCG* IV, ch. 24 (no. 3612).
[374] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 99.
[375] *ST* II-II 1.8.3.
[376] That being said, it is still the case that: "The Father has no priority in relation to the Son: neither in duration, nor in nature, nor conceptually, nor in dignity . . . There is no priority whatsoever of one person over another in God." I *Sent*. D. 9, q. 2, a. 1. As quoted in Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 71.
[377] *ST* III, 45.1.
[378] *In 1 Cor.* 3.16 (no. 172).
[379] *ST* I 14.1.
[380] *ST* I 43.5.2.
[381] A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 76.
[382] Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIC. XII. 15. Cited in *ST* I, q. 93, a. 8, sed contra.
[383] Francis L. B. Cunningham, *The Indwelling of the Trinity: A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Theory of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2008), 7.
[384] Cunningham, 182.
[385] Cunningham, 197.
[386] *De Ver*., q. 18, a. 2.
[387] *ST* I 43.7.
[388] Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 387. "The Son is sent to confer the gift of knowing God and this gift is a participation in the character of the Word. The Holy Spirit is sent so that the enamoured saints can reach up to God in a way that participates in the personal character of the Holy Spirit—love."
[389] Emery, 397.
[390] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 102–4.
[391] Translated from the Latin Vulgate.
[392] 1 John 5:20. Text translated from Latin Vulgate.
[393] *ST* I 27.1.
[394] Revelation 19:13.
[395] John 1:14.
[396] 1 John 1:1-3.
[397] Romans 8:15.
[398] Galatians 4:6.
[399] Romans 5:5.
[400] 1 John 3:1.

[401] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley, vol. I.1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936), 334ff.
[402] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. G.W. Bromiley, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 295.
[403] Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 42f; Ormerod, "The Psychological Analogy for the Trinity: At Odds with Modernity," 285.
[404] "These two positions - the power of intellect to know reality and the intrinsic intelligibility of reality - stand in diametric opposition to the dominant post-Kantian epistemology of our day, which has effectively separated knowledge and reality, leading to widespread epistemological, and eventually moral, relativism. It is for this reason that Pope John Paul II has made repeated calls in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* for philosophers to recover their confidence in the powers of the intellect to understand reality, as a means of overcoming our present relativistic plight." Ormerod, "The Psychological Analogy for the Trinity: At Odds with Modernity," 290.
[405] Ormerod, 291.
[406] *ST* I 14.1.3.
[407] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. J. F. Donceel (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 22.
[408] Dennis W. Jowers, *The Trinitarian Axiom of Karl Rahner: The Economic Trinity Is the Immanent Trinity and Vice Versa* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 89f.
[409] Rahner, *The Trinity*, 83f.
[410] Rahner, 91.
[411] Rahner, 88.
[412] Rahner, 88 n. 11.
[413] Rahner, 99.
[414] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 172.
[415] Rahner, 172.
[416] Rahner, "The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology," 72.
[417] In contrast to Lonergan's four-point hypothesis, Karl Rahner offers what could be called a "two-point hypothesis." Neil J. Ormerod, "Two Points or Four?--Rahner and Lonergan on Trinity, Incarnation, Grace, and Beatific Vision," *Theological Studies* 68, no. 3 (September 2007): 661–73.
[418] Rahner, *The Trinity*, 106.
[419] Rahner, 109.
[420] Ormerod, "Two Points or Four?," 666–67.
[421] Ormerod, 667.
[422] Ormerod, 669.
[423] Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 577.
[424] Lonergan, 637.
[425] Anselm of Canterbury, "Monologion," in *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2000), 64.

[426] Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, 577.
[427] Lonergan, 615.
[428] Lonergan, 617.
[429] Lonergan, 585.
[430] Lonergan, 611.
[431] Lonergan, 621.
[432] Contrast this with Karl Rahner's insistence on the mystery of the Trinity, which remains such, even in the beatific vision.
[433] Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, 627–29.
[434] *ST* I 84.7.
[435] ST I 88.1.
[436] Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, 587.
[437] Lonergan, 631.
[438] Lonergan, 631.
[439] Lonergan, 639.
[440] Lonergan, 641.
[441] Lonergan, 643–45.
[442] 1 John 1:5; 4:8. Lonergan, 675.
[443] Lonergan, 677.
[444] John 1:1-2.
[445] Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, 683.
[446] Robert M. Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology," *Theological Studies* 4, no. 67 (2006): 759.
[447] John 16:13, 15
[448] Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, 683.
[449] Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York; Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 93.
[450] 1 Corinthians 12:3.
[451] Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology," 759.
[452] Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael G. Shields, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 471–73.
[453] Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology," 767.
[454] Doran, 771.
[455] Doran, 762.
[456] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972), 115–16.
[457] Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology," 768.
[458] John 12:49.
[459] John 14:9.
[460] John 14:6.
[461] 1 John 4:19.
[462] Doran, "The Starting Point of Systematic Theology," 757.

[463] Doran has responded that this is not, in a strict sense, a *hapax legomenon*, since this passage in *De Deo Trino*, is actually a reuse of earlier published material. Clearly, Lonergan did not see fit to revise or reduce this hypothesis.
[464] Charles Hefling, "Quaestio Disputata on the (Economic) Trinity: An Argument in Conversation with Robert Doran," *Theological Studies* 68, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 645.
[465] Hefling, 646.
[466] Hefling, 658.
[467] Hefling, 659.
[468] Hefling, 648.
[469] Hefling, 650.
[470] Hefling, 656.
[471] *ST* I-II, q. 111, a. 3.
[472] Robert M Doran, "Addressing the Four-Point Hypothesis," *Theological Studies* 68, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 679.
[473] Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, "Sanctifying Grace in a 'Methodical Theology,'" *Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 66–67.
[474] "One may sum up the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity briefly and simply by saying that *God* is the One who reveals himself." Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1:380.
[475] Karen Kilby, "Trinity, Tradition, and Politics," in *Recent Developments in Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Christophe Chalamet and Marc Vial (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishing, 2014), 82.
[476] *Gaudium et spes*, 4, 11.
[477] Boff, *Theology and praxis*, 175–85.
[478] Michael Hirsh, "Why the New Nationalists Are Taking Over," POLITICO Magazine, June 27, 2016, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/06/nationalism-donald-trump-boris-johnson-brexit-foreign-policy-xenophobia-isolationism-213995.
[479] Anselm Min, "The Division and Reunification of a Nation: Theological Reflections on the Destiny of the Korean People," in Christianity in Korea, ed. Robert E. Buswell and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 276 n. 1.
[480] This is demonstrable in qualified identities of Asian Americans, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and so on, terms which simply do not exist for US citizens of European, or "white" descent.
[481] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3.
[482] Anderson, 2.
[483] Anderson, 6.
[484] Anderson himself parallels the apparent 'givenness' of nationality to that of gender. Of course this givenness has itself been radically called into question. The relationship between the radical deconstruction of gender and the critique of nationalism is perhaps a fruitful path of inquiry.
[485] Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag*, Cambridge Cultural Social Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[486] Marvin and Ingle, 4.
[487] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 14.

[488] Anderson, 13.
[489] Anderson, 24.
[490] Anderson, 44.
[491] Anderson, 143f.
[492] Marvin and Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, 63.
[493] Marvin and Ingle, 66.
[494] Marvin and Ingle, 2.
[495] Marvin and Ingle, 79.
[496] Marvin and Ingle, 87.
[497] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 78, 100–101; Marvin and Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, 90.
[498] Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*.
[499] Henry Goldschmidt, "Introduction: Race, Nation, and Religion," in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, ed. Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[500] Jennifer Snow, "The Civilization of White Men: The Race of the Hindu in United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind," in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, ed. Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[501] Justin McCurry, "Korean Peninsula Will Be United by 2045, Says Seoul amid Japan Row," *The Guardian*, August 15, 2019, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/15/korean-peninsula-will-be-united-by-2045-says-seoul-amid-japan-row.
[502] Hudson Meadwell, "It's the English, Stupid! Brexit Is an Expression of English Nationalism," *The London School of Economics and Political Science* (blog), August 6, 2019, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/08/06/long-read-its-the-english-stupid/.
[503] Gordon Brown, "The Very Idea of a United Kingdom Is Being Torn Apart by Toxic Nationalism | Gordon Brown," *The Guardian*, August 10, 2019, sec. Opinion, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/10/very-idea-of-a-united-kingdom-being-torn-apart-by-toxic-nationalism.
[504] Sumanta Banerjee, "Pitfalls of Neo-Nationalism," *Economic and Political Weekly* 40, no. 33 (2005): 3629–31; Karoline Postel-Vinay, "How Neo-Nationalism Went Global," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 15, 2017, https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2017-03-15/a-look-at-global-neo-nationalism-after-brexit-and-donald-trumps-election; Klaus von Beyme, "Populism, Right-Wing Extremism and Neo-Nationalism," in *New Authoritarianism*, ed. Jerzy J. Wiatr, Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century (Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2019).
[505] Nate Silver, "2016 Election Forecast," FiveThirtyEight, June 29, 2016, https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2016-election-forecast/.
[506] Josh Katz, "2016 Election Forecast: Who Will Be President?," *The New York Times*, July 19, 2016, sec. The Upshot, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/upshot/presidential-polls-forecast.html, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/upshot/presidential-polls-forecast.html.
[507] Many have already noted that just as Roosevelt harnessed the power of radio, and Kennedy television, Trump is the first President of the social media era.

[508] One such tactic is the constant use of nicknames, like "Low Energy Jeb," "Lyin' Ted," "Little Marco," "Crooked Hillary," "Sleepy Joe," "Crazy Bernie," and "Pocahontas."
[509] Dan P. McAdams, "The Appeal of the Primal Leader: Human Evolution and Donald J. Trump," *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture* 1, no. 2 (2017): 5.
[510] McAdams, 7.
[511] Trump, Donald. Twitter Post. January 6, 2018, 4:27 AM.
[512] Trump, Donald. Twitter Post. January 6, 2018, 4:30 AM.
[513] Donald Trump, *Crippled America* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2015), 99.
[514] McAdams, "The Appeal of the Primal Leader," 10.
[515] Russell Belk, "Collective Narcissism, Anti-Globalism, Brexit, Trump, and the Chinese Juggernaut," *Markets, Globalization & Development Review* 2, no. 3 (December 6, 2017): 4, https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/mgdr/vol2/iss3/2.
[516] At an NRA rally in Kentucky, then candidate Trump said:

> "We are gonna win, win, win. We're going to win with military, we're going to win at the borders, we're going to win with trade, we're going to win at everything. And some of you are friends and you're going to call, and you're going to say, 'Mr. President, please, we can't take it anymore, we can't win anymore like this, Mr. President, you're driving us crazy, you're winning too much, please Mr. President, not so much,' and I'm going to say, 'I'm sorry, we're going to keep winning because we are going to make America great again.'"

Paul Bedard, "Trump: 'Gonna Win so Much People Will Say We Can't Take It Anymore,'" Washington Examiner, May 20, 2016, https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-gonna-win-so-much-people-will-say-we-cant-take-it-anymore.
[517] Agnieszka Golec de Zavala et al., "Collective Narcissism and Its Social Consequences," *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 97, no. 6 (December 2009): 1075.
[518] Agnieszka Golec de Zavala et al., "Collective Narcissism Predicts Hypersensitivity to In-Group Insult and Direct and Indirect Retaliatory Intergroup Hostility," *European Journal of Personality* 30, no. 6 (2016): 532–51.
[519] Christopher M. Federico and Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, "Collective Narcissism and the 2016 US Presidential Vote," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 111, https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfx048.
[520] Tessa Berenson, "Donald Trump Calls For 'Complete Shutdown' Of Muslim Entry To U.S.," Time, December 7, 2015, https://time.com/4139476/donald-trump-shutdown-muslim-immigration/.
[521] "Senator Obama Boarder Securirty," September 21, 2006, https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4652653/senator-obama-boarder-securirty.
[522] "FY 2016 ICE Immigration Removals," accessed July 27, 2019, https://www.ice.gov/removal-statistics/2016.
[523] William Cummings, "Trump Defends Conditions for Detained Migrant Kids, Blames Obama for Family Separations; Fact Checkers Call Foul," USA TODAY, June 23, 2019, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/06/23/trump-falsely-says-obama-started-family-separation/1540733001/.

[524] John Curtice, "How Deeply Does Britain's Euroscepticism Run?" (British Social Attitudes, June 2016), http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39024/euroscepticism.pdf.
[525] Owen Jones, "The Left Must Now Campaign to Leave the EU," *The Guardian*, July 14, 2015, sec. Opinion, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/14/left-reject-eu-greece-eurosceptic.
[526] Heather Stewart, "Corbyn: Brexit Would Go Ahead Even If Labour Won Snap Election," *The Guardian*, December 21, 2018, sec. Politics, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/dec/21/jeremy-corbyn-labour-policy-leaving-eu.
[527] Megan Galbreath, "An Analysis of Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen," *Harvard International Review* 38, no. 3 (2017): 7–9.
[528] Pål Kolstø, "Introduction: Russian Nationalism Is Back – but Precisely What Does That Mean?," in *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–2015*, ed. Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 1.
[529] Kolstø, 6.
[530] Paul F. Scotchmer, "Culture Clash for China as Xi Introduces Confucius to Marx," *South China Morning Post*, July 27, 2019, https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3017929/china-headed-clash-cultures-xi-jinping-fuses-confucius-and-marx.
[531] "[T]he Chinese government is deliberately whipping up nationalist fervor among mainland Chinese citizens and is granting license for people to act against imagined enemies of China. This form of political and psychological warfare has the potential to lead to even greater tragedy than a conventional military crackdown, as it could poison the relationship between Hong Kongers and mainland Chinese citizens for generations to come. This form of political and psychological warfare has the potential to lead to even greater tragedy than a conventional military crackdown, as it could poison the relationship between Hong Kongers and mainland Chinese citizens for generations to come." Andreas Fulda, "Beijing Is Weaponizing Nationalism Against Hong Kongers," *Foreign Policy* (blog), July 29, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/29/beijing-is-weaponizing-nationalism-against-hong-kongers/.
[532] In the case of the Tibetans and Uighurs there is a prominently religious dimension to the conflict with the Chinese state. And this is not at all surprising as national identity virtually always carries with it "religious" implications. But especially important here is the way in which non-national identities (in this case, religious) can serve as a strategic form of resistance to nationalistic hegemony. Jeff Kingston, "Religion and Nationalism in Asia," in *Asian Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed. Jeff Kingston (London: Routledge, 2016), 47.
[533] Yael Tamir, *Why Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 1, 5.
[534] Tamir, 6.
[535] Tamir, 12.
[536] Tamir, 86.
[537] Tamir, 89.
[538] Tamir, 89–90.
[539] Tamir, 94.

[540] Patrick Martin, "The Nationalist 'Socialism' of Bernie Sanders," World Socialist Web Site, accessed August 20, 2019, https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/05/06/pers-m06.html.
[541] Tamir, *Why Nationalism*, 173.
[542] Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 22.
[543] Marvin and Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, 187.
[544] Compare this with the most common "path to citizenship" offered to immigrants, namely, military service. An individual or group is only fully a member of the community when they participate in the ritual sacrifice.
[545] "Trump's Controversial Transgender Military Policy Goes into Effect," NBC News, accessed August 19, 2019, https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/trump-s-controversial-transgender-military-policy-goes-effect-n993826.
[546] Daniel Avery, "50+ Brands with Pride Collections Supporting the LGBT Community," Newsweek, June 3, 2019, https://www.newsweek.com/these-30-brands-are-celebrating-pride-giving-back-lgbt-community-1441707.
[547] "LGBT Data & Demographics – The Williams Institute," accessed August 19, 2019, https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT#density.
[548] Rod Dreher, "Social Justice: Our New Civil Religion," The American Conservative, accessed August 19, 2019, https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/lgbt-pride-social-justice-our-new-civil-religion/.
[549] Margaret R. Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness, and the Right to Have Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 133.
[550] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 8.
[551] Somers, *Genealogies*, 141.
[552] "Antigovernment Movement," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed August 21, 2019, https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment.
[553] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 31.
[554] Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, "The Monster's Tail," in *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: The New Press, 2005), 22.
[555] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 36.
[556] Julia Preston, "Mexican Data Show Migration to U.S. in Decline," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/us/15immig.html.
[557] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 38.
[558] Gretchen Frazee and Joshua Barajas, "Trump Says Walls Work. It's Much More Complicated," PBS NewsHour, January 9, 2019, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/trump-says-walls-work-its-much-more-complicated.
[559] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, 123ff.
[560] Craig Calhoun, *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream* (London: Routledge, 2007), 13.
[561] Calhoun, 164–65.
[562] David G. Victor et al., "Prove Paris Was More than Paper Promises," *Nature News* 548, no. 7665 (August 3, 2017): 25.

[563] Not only does the dynamic of national self-interest work against truly cooperative efforts to combat global environmental crises, a recent study has indicated that ecological threats have a strong correlation with an increase in prejudiced attitude and political nationalism. Joshua Conrad Jackson et al., "Ecological and Cultural Factors Underlying the Global Distribution of Prejudice," *PLOS ONE* 14, no. 9 (September 6, 2019): e0221953, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0221953.
[564] As quoted in Artur Mrówczyński-Van Allen, "Beyond Political Theology and Its Liquidation: From Theopolitical Monotheism to Trinitarianism," *Modern Theology* 33, no. 4 (October 2017): 579.
[565] Erik Peterson, "Monotheism as a Political Problem: A Contribution to the History of Political Theology in the Roman Empire," in *Theological Tractates*, trans. Michael Hollerich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 68.
[566] Peterson, 69.
[567] Peterson, 71.
[568] Peterson, 75.
[569] As quoted in Peterson, 73.
[570] Peterson, 81.
[571] Origen, "Contra Celsum," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Frederick Crombie, vol. 4 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1885), Book 1, Ch. 1.
[572] Origen, Book V, Ch. 25.
[573] Origen, Book V, Ch 41.
[574] Origen, Book VIII, Ch. 12.
[575] Origen, Book VIII, Ch. 12.
[576] Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel*, ed. and trans. W.J. Ferrar (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), Book VII, Ch. 2.
[577] Compare this with Augustine's treatment of the issue in *City of God* (Book III, Ch. 30) where he sees clearly a distinction between the peace of Rome, won through bloodshed and violence, and the peace of Christ.
[578] Peterson, "Monotheism," 96.
[579] Peterson, 103.
[580] This is an apparent critique of the psychological analogy, which I wholeheartedly endorsed in chapter four. I will respond to this concern below. Erik Peterson, "Correspondence with Adolf von Harnack," in *Theological Tractates*, trans. Michael Hollerich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 103.
[581] Mrówczyński-Van Allen, "Beyond Political Theology and Its Liquidation: From Theopolitical Monotheism to Trinitarianism," 580.
[582] Mrówczyński-Van Allen, 589.
[583] Mrówczyński-Van Allen, 592.
[584] Mrówczyński-Van Allen, 571.
[585] Mrówczyński-Van Allen, 581.
[586] Peterson, "Monotheism," 68. Emphasis mine.
[587] Far from denying monarchy altogether, Peterson says more carefully: "With the development of the orthodox dogma, the idea of divine monarchy loses its political-theological character." Yes, the triune God is king. And for exactly this reason his

kingship cannot be used to prop up any earthly kingship. Quoted in Gyorgy Gereby, "Political Theology versus Theological Politics: Erik Peterson and Carl Schmitt," *New German Critique* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 16.

[588] Again, he quotes Gregory of Elvira: "Whoever would want to realize the divine monarchy on earth would be like the Antichrist, for it is him who alone will be the monarch of the whole earth." Gereby, 20.

[589] Peterson, "Monotheism," 104f.

[590] Peterson, 68.

[591] Marvin and Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*, 3.

[592] We have seen already how the rise of nationalism in the twenty-first century, and especially the defense of nationalism on the part of those liberals whom we might otherwise consider globalist sympathizers, indicates the crucial and central function that the nation plays in contemporary society. To begin with, the nation remains sovereign, at least in our social imagination. Whether or not the nation *materially* can exercise the power that its devotees attribute to it is a separate question. Just as we may very well ask whether or not Huītzilōpōchtli saw or received the human sacrifices of the Aztec, yet it nevertheless remained true that the cult was strong and, in that sense, the god really did exercise sovereignty. In that sense, the cult of the nation is strong, and strengthening.

[593] Anatol Lieven, "Clinton and Trump: Two Faces of American Nationalism," *Survival* 58, no. 5 (October 2016): 7.

[594] Lieven, 9.

[595] Peterson, "Monotheism," 68.

[596] James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, and Alexander Roberts, eds., "The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 1 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, Co., 1885).

[597] Peterson, "Correspondence with Adolf von Harnack," 24.

[598] "Admittedly, the traditional Protestant Church had no dogma, for it lacked that teaching authority that ought to be attributed to the determinative power over dogma *jure divino*. And yet the Protestant Church possessed a kind of quasi-dogma in its various confessional documents, which had a dignity analogous to that of dogma, to the degree that, and so long as, the state guarded the binding legitimacy of these confessions. With the end of legal establishment and the introduction of the new constitution of Evangelical provincial churches in Germany, the public character of the Protestant Church and Protestant theology has *in principle* been extinguished." Peterson, 25.

[599] Erik Peterson, "The Church," in *Theological Tractates*, trans. Michael Hollerich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 31.

[600] Peterson, "Correspondence with Adolf von Harnack," 27.

[601] Peterson, 27.

[602] Similarly, *Nostra aetate*, and *Unitatis redintegratio*, mark a new chapter in the relations between Catholics and Protestants, as well as other world religions. Those who were "heretics" and "schismatics" in an earlier part of the century were then "separated brethren." I have to imagine that Peterson would not be very enthused by these developments, and not because of any animus toward Protestants, or a lack of an interest in Protestant-Catholic dialogue. On the contrary, in his dialogue with von Harnack, it is precisely because of his desire for a "direct confessional exchange" with Protestantism

that he wishes that the Protestant ecclesial communities could maintain a more dogmatic stance. To appeal to reason, feeling, or corporal works of mercy is a false ecumenism, because rather than working towards reconciliation on the issues that divide, they are simply swept under the rug.

[603] William Cavanaugh, "Killing for the Telephone Company: Why the Nation-State Is Not the Keeper of the Common Good," *Modern Theology* 20, no. 2 (April 2004): 266.

[604] Peterson, "The Church," 38.

[605] Erik Peterson, "The Book on the Angels: Their Place and Meaning in the Liturgy," in *Theological Tractates*, trans. Michael Hollerich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 112.

[606] Peterson, 113.

[607] Peterson, 114.

[608] *ST* I 108.6.

[609] Ephesians 6:12.

[610] Colossians 2:15.

[611] 1 Corinthians 10:20-21.

[612] *ST* I 113.8.

[613] Cavanaugh, "Killing for the Telephone Company: Why the Nation-State Is Not the Keeper of the Common Good," 267.

[614] Cavanaugh, 266.

[615] Romans 1:27.

[616] Cavanaugh, 267.

[617] Anthony R. Lusvardi, SJ, "Girard and the 'Sacrifice of the Mass': Mimetic Theory and Eucharistic Theology," *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 179.

[618] Hebrews 13:12-14.

[619] Lusvardi, SJ, "Girard and the 'Sacrifice of the Mass': Mimetic Theory and Eucharistic Theology," 166.

[620] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1397.

[621] 1 John 3:16.

[622] Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 63.

[623] Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 50.

[624] Pope Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the 14th Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences" (May 3, 2008), https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080503_social-sciences.html.

[625] Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, 79.

[626] Jeremiah 29:7 NASB.

[627] Romans 13:1 NASB.

[628] Acts 5:29.

[629] National Conference of Catholic Bishops Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, "Environment and Art in Catholic Worship," November 1977, 101.

[630] Incidentally, these flagpoles are usually topped by bronze eagle finials. With this display of overt idolatry in a Christian sanctuary, one cannot help but think of those courageous young Jewish men, recounted by Josephus, who were martyred for cutting

down the Roman eagle which Herod had set up over the Temple Gate in Jerusalem. See Josephus, *Jewish War*, Book I, Ch. 33.
[631] For the full story of Bl. Franz, see: Franz Jägerstätter, *Franz Jägerstätter: Letters and Writings from Prison*, ed. Erna Putz, trans. Robert Krieg (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009).
[632] Brian Wicker, "The Significance of Franz Jägerstätter," *New Blackfriars* 89, no. 1022 (July 2008): 388.
[633] Jonathan Luxmoore, "Easter Europe's Church Leaders Face Growing Criticism over Refugees," *National Catholic Reporter*, March 9, 2017, https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/eastern-europes-church-leaders-face-growing-criticism-over-refugees.
[634] Anthony Faiola and Michael Birnbaum, "Pope Calls on Europe's Catholics to Take in Refugees," *Washington Post*, September 6, 2015, sec. Europe, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/refugees-keep-streaming-into-europe-as-crisis-continues-unabated/2015/09/06/8a330572-5345-11e5-b225-90edbd49f362_story.html.
[635] Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*.
[636] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2241: "The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him."
[637] Joseph H. Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 229.
[638] Miriam Jordan, "No More Family Separations, Except These 900," *The New York Times*, July 30, 2019, sec. U.S., https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/30/us/migrant-family-separations.html.
[639] Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 152ff.
[640] Thomas Nail, "Sanctuary, Solidarity, Status!," in *Open Borders: In Defense of Free Movement*, ed. Reece Jones (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2019), 28.
[641] Kumari Rigaud, Kanta, Alex de Sherbinin, Bryan Jones, Jonas Bergmann, Viviane Clement, Kayly Ober, Jacob Schewe, Susana Adamo, Brent McCusker, Silke Heuser, and Amelia Midgley. 2018. *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
[642] *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*, US Catholic Bishops, 2001.
[643] Things like eliminating single-use plastic straws are basically symbolic gestures. And perhaps even more dangerously, as some experts have noted, these small steps may create a deluded sense of self-satisfaction, as if, "I have done my part."
[644] Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, 14.
[645] Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, 64.
[646] Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 188-189.
[647] Peterson, "Correspondence with Adolf von Harnack," 103.
[648] Ephesians 2:13-16.
[649] Romans 12:1.

[650] 1 John 3:16.
[651] Galatians 2:20.