Evangelical Review of Theology

GENERAL EDITOR: THOMAS SCHIRRMACHER

Volume 38 · Number 2 · April 2014

Articles and book reviews reflecting global evangelical theology for the purpose of discerning the obedience of faith

Published by

Paternoster: thinking faith

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WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
Theological Commission

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WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
Theological Commission

ERT (2014) 38:2, 138-150

The Trinity and Servant-Leadership

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Keywords: Egalitarianism, exaltation, image, kenosis, leadership, Pentecost, servant

As the title of my article suggests, I will be reflecting on what resources consideration of the Trinity offers for the exercise of leadership by trinitarians, whether that leadership be in the church or in wider society. In contrast to impressions given in some recent delineations of the matter, I will be concluding that strong leadership is neither inherently destructive and abusive nor needing to be replaced by 'flat' egalitarianism. Rather, it is to be found in the Trinity, in a form that is protected from autocracy by the self-emptying, or 'kenosis' of the one who is leading. As such, it can be mirrored in human life, so long as the leadership in question is genuinely servant-leadership. This form of leadership is freeing for the people who are being led, and effective in achieving the purposes of the organisation being led.

To those who are familiar with various shades of trinitarianism, it will be obvious from the outset that the particular form of trinitarianism that is most easily applicable to servant-leadership is a 'social' form. This article proceeds to work within the framework of social trinitarianism. It is also obvious to students of trinitarianism that social trinitarianism highlights threeness in God. Its defence of oneness in God is sometimes weaker, and proponents of social trinitarianism have occasionally been accused of straying rather too close to tritheism for comfort. I do not seek to engage with that discussion in this article. Suffice it to say that I believe in one God, and regard perichoresis as the best defence of God's unity.

I Applying One's Trinitarianism

As this article is a contribution to a journal number dedicated to considering 'applied trinitarianism', I take it as read that in some way the Trinity is applicable to the human sphere, and that I do not need here to defend such a stance. I do, however, think that care needs to be taken in thinking about the lines along which this application can be pursued. Some sort of relation between divine being and human being must be posited as a basis for any sort of analogical thinking that draws conclusions for humanity from the divine being.

Typically at this point, a relation of similarity is sought, so that a conclusion can be reached that 'as God is, so is humanity', or 'as God is, so ought to be humanity'. It is often sought in one particular strand of biblical thinking about the divine creation of humans. The account in Genesis 1 provides data for this pursuit. Humans are made in the divine image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27), and as such no doubt reflect certain divine characteristics. A clear example of this starting point at work is to be found pervading Tom Smail's *Like Father, Like Son*, which is tellingly subtitled, *The Trinity Imaged in Our Humanity,* and which, perhaps even more tellingly, has chapter titles which all include the word, 'Image'.[1]

This approach is potentially problematic, however. First, it offers no guidance as to what *aspects* of human being are in God's image. Is human physicality, for instance, divinely imaged? Are we to infer that God has two eyes? Secondly, it does not clarify *extent*: how closely human being mirrors the divine. Assuredly, Genesis may well have been intended to indicate that the first humans reflected something of God's being in their own. However, and regarding the early chapters of Genesis as a narrative with inner coherence, these first humans were persuaded by the serpent to eat something that would enable them to 'be like God' (Gen. 3:5, NIV). So they were not 'like God' entirely. Where, then, lay the limits of their Godlikeness?

Thirdly, *chronology* is unclear: still granting these chapters of Genesis narrative coherence, these first two humans gave in to the serpent's persuasion and behaved in a way that led to dire consequences. Now, certain curses pertained. If these humans had been in God's image before this 'fall' from their pristine state, who is to say to what degree this divine image remained intact thereafter? As later scriptures in the canon remain relatively quiet on this point, Christians have expressed ongoing uncertainty through continued debate.

Thus no firm conclusion can be reached for humanity by gazing reverently at the Trinity and declaring, 'on the basis of the divine image at creation, as God is, so are we.' I seek a different starting point, not in creation but in redemption, not in a statement concerning how humans were, but in a wish concerning what they might come to be. I begin, in fact, with Christ's 'high-priestly' prayer presented in John 17, which I believe gives us an opportunity to state, 'on the basis of this prayer, as God is, so God wishes us to be'.

What I find here, among other requests, is the wish expressed that certain qualities of relationship between humans might reflect the quality of relationship between the Father and the Son that Jesus knew existed (for such is the import of the prayer's wording). In particular, Jesus prayed for those the Father had given him, that 'they may be one as we are one' (Jn. 17:11, NIV), and for later believers that they may be one 'just as you are in me and

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1 Tom Smail, *Like Father, Like Son: The Trinity Imaged in Our Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005).

I am in you . . . I in them and you in me' (Jn. 17:21, 23, NIV). This 'in-ness' of one person in another is later expressed in terms of love: '. . . in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them' (Jn. 17:26).

It will be obvious to those with even a smattering of New Testament Greek that 'in' here could just as well be translated 'among'. This fits with the request for Jesus' disciples to be 'one'. The prayer is not for Christ's followers as isolated individuals, but for them as a community.

Of course, one of the doubts about the divine image referred to in Genesis 1 must also be acknowledged here: that of *extent*. I noted that the divine image did not protect Eve from the serpent's temptation for her to do that which would make her 'like God', indicating in the logic of the narrative that there were differences as well as similarities between the divine and the human. So too in John 17 no indication is given about where the boundaries lie between the sort of unity that Christ's followers can experience with one another and the sort of unity that the Father and the Son enjoy.

However, the other two weaknesses concerning the Genesis 1 reference to divine image are overcome. Now, the *aspect* is clear. It is loving relationship. The reference to love indicates a quality of relationship that is to flow from that between the Father and the Son into the created realm, between Christ's followers. As there is love between the Father and the Son, so there is to be love between Christians—and indeed the same sort of love—'in-one-another-type-love'—as between Father and Son. There is to be, so to speak, a divine overflow of love.

Also, *chronology* is somewhat clearer: this is a future quality to which Jesus looks forward. It is something we can confidently hope for and work for. (I admit, however, that it is still unclear how far this prayer can be answered in this life; presumably, it can fully be answered only in the resurrection life to come—Jn. 11:25, etc.)

I conclude from this presentation of the Johannine Jesus' prayer that an important NT strand of thinking, expressed more subtly elsewhere, is that there is available to humans, in and through their relationship with God in Christ, a loving quality of their relationships with each other that reflects the quality of divine love within the Trinity. This is my starting point for exploring the 'application' of trinitarianism to matters of human relatedness, including in the case of this article the matter of servant-leadership.

I will be arguing that the Trinity can be conceived in a way that, on the basis of the divine-human connection set out above, means that Jesus' high-priestly prayer is, among many other things, a plea for servant-leadership within the church. I will thus be disagreeing with calls for 'flat' egalitarian relationships in church life and other social structures. I will also, of course, be disagreeing with views of the Trinity that see the divine relations as symmetrically egalitarian and 'flat'. I will be seeing leadership within the Trinity (unsurprisingly centred in the Father), but will be seeing this as servant-leadership. The link between service and leadership will be the link of self-emptying love. We call this self-emptying 'kenosis'.

II Kenosis and Exaltation

There are many ways that the love between the trinitarian persons can be explored. In my recent book, *Trinity After Pentecost*,[2] I explored the Trinity from the point of view of Pentecost, as is natural from my own Pentecostal perspective. In particular, I looked at what the events of Pentecost meant for the divine persons. This led me to consider kenosis and exaltation, as I will set out in this section.

A word, first, about my methods: as soon as one begins to look at the Trinity by way of events in salvation-history, whether one chooses Pentecost,[3] the cross,[4] the incarnation,[5] the conception,[6] or any other such event, one is inevitably glimpsing the triune God as this God expresses the divine self through these events—through the 'economy' of world-history and especially salvation-history. This so-called 'economic Trinity' is all we have to look at, for the portals of heaven remain as yet otherwise unopened.

We trust that God's self-revealing honesty ensures that, while far more may be true of the 'immanent Trinity'—what God is in the eternal divine self—than can be known from the 'economic Trinity', nevertheless what the activities of the divine persons reveal of God's self is true of God's eternal 'inner' self. If this were not so, we could know nothing of God's nature through what has happened in our world.

One other brief methodological point I will make is that the choice to focus on Pentecost puts me firmly in Lukan territory (I take it as established that the same author wrote the third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles). Nevertheless, the whole NT witnesses to a decisive eruption of the activity of the Spirit of God among God's people in, through, and after the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. Pentecost came, according to all the NT witnesses—whatever they called it and whatever weight they would have put on Luke's precise details of an upper room, a vast pilgrim crowd, excited speaking in tongues, and mass conversion.

Pentecost came, in the sense that the Spirit was now experienced as a reality for all the new covenant people of God in Christ, rather than a select few (Joel 2:28; cf. Acts 2:17). Pentecost came, in the sense that the Spirit previously experienced as the Spirit of God was now, also, experienced as the Spirit of Christ, whether that primarily meant that the Spirit conveyed the felt presence of Christ (especially in Paul), or it meant primarily that the ascended and exalted Christ sent the Spirit—from the Father (especially in Luke-Acts), or both (especially in John). My discussion does not just have to do with some sort of skewed 'Lukan' Trinity or trinitarianism.

I was first encouraged to try glimpsing the Trinity from the viewpoint of

2 William P. Atkinson, *Trinity After Pentecost* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013).

3 So, as well as here, Steve M. Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2012).

4 So Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (English Translation; London: SCM, 1974 [1973]).

5 So Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (English Translation; London; New York: Continuum, 1970 [1967]).

6 So Tom Smail, *The Giving Gift*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988). Although this is a work of pneumatology, it is set in a firmly trinitarian framework.

Pentecost by Max Turner. His impetus is clear from the following chapter title of his: 'Towards Trinitarian Theology—Perspectives from Pentecost'.[7] His references to Acts 2:33 intrigued me. While he sees in this text an implicit distinction between the Father and the Spirit (for otherwise Jesus would be sending the Father—an idea that Turner regards as blasphemous), his primary interest is in the implications this statement has for Lukan divine christology (only God can send God's Spirit; Jesus sends God's Spirit: therefore, Jesus is divine). It was, in this regard, his strongly worded reference to Jesus' now being, in effect, 'Lord' of the Spirit that especially caught my attention.[8]

While Turner thought through the implications of this in terms of the exaltation of Christ, I thought it through in terms of the humility of the Spirit. According to Luke, in Jesus' life on earth, the Spirit had led Jesus (e.g., Lk. 4:1) and been the source of his joy (Lk. 10:21). Jesus had thus been dependent, at least in some respects, on the resources of the Spirit. After Christ's ascension, however, Jesus was now 'in charge of' the Spirit, so to speak, sending the Spirit to earth. In some regards, roles had reversed.[9] I saw in this a humble 'kenosis', or self-emptying, of the Spirit: the person of the Spirit was prepared in humility to take a subservient role in relation to Christ, having tasted a leading role.

The idea of a kenosis of the Spirit may surprise some. We are used to the idea, however it has been expressed, of the kenosis of the Son. The pre-incarnate Son did not keep a tight grip on heavenly glory but was willing to undergo a self emptying, or 'kenosis', thereby suffering the degradations and deprivations of earthly life. In the NT, the most direct testimony to this idea is the well-known hymn in Philippians 2, where in verse 7 the term, in verb form, is used. As the NRSV translates it, Christ 'emptied himself'. The idea can be understood not only with respect to the created order but also with respect to the Son's relations with the Father. The Son emptied himself not just, or even primarily, for the salvation of humanity, but for the sake of the Father and the Father's glory (e.g., Phil. 2:11).

Can this idea of kenosis apply to other persons of the Trinity? Yes. When we turn our gaze to Pentecost, most particularly but not exclusively as this event was presented in Acts, we can see a kenosis of the Spirit in two regards. We can see one, first, with respect to the created order (the Spirit, admittedly did not undergo temptation, hunger, etc. as the Son did; however, the Spirit at Pentecost humbly entered feeble, fallible human hearts). Secondly, as I introduced above, the Spirit underwent kenosis with respect to the Son (the Spirit who had led the Son in the latter's earthly ministry was now willing to be sent by that same—now exalted—Son).

If we look closely, we can also see a dynamic reciprocation between kenosis and exaltation. The humble, self-

7 Chapter 11 of Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996).

8 Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, 174.

9 Jürgen Moltmann, in a somewhat different context, makes the same point (*Trinity and Kingdom* [English Translation; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993 (1980)], 89; cf. 211).

emptied, kenotic Son exalted the Spirit in his earthly ministry (Lk. 4:18; 11:20; 12:12; 24:49);[10] but in turn it was as a result of the Son's own kenosis that he was later exalted. Now, this exalted Son sent the Spirit, and in turn the kenotic, sent Spirit of Pentecost exalted the Son, through the Christ-extolling preaching of the Spirit-empowered church. By way of analogy, this temporal dynamic reciprocation, I suggest, reflects an eternal dynamic reciprocation between the Son and the Spirit in which each empties self in order to exalt the other, and in which the kenosis of the self is rewarded by exaltation.

As interesting as the kenosis of the Spirit and the Son are to trinitarianism, the intra-trinitarian kenosis that is of most interest to this article's focus is that of the Father. If the idea of the Spirit's kenosis is somewhat surprising, a posited kenosis of the Father is perhaps even more counter-intuitive. Surely, one might think, of all the persons of the Trinity, the Father at least abides in eternal exaltation, 'uncomplicated' by kenosis of any sort? To those who think thus, I say, 'Think again!' Amidst the reciprocal dynamics of kenosis and exaltation between Son and Spirit, the Father does not remain aloof from such vicissitudes as the untouchable, unimpassioned, only-exalted Ultimate.

When Moltmann looked at the Trinity from the nearby viewpoint of the cross, he rightly saw the self-emptying and suffering of the Father in that event.[11] The cross was not only a self-emptying act of selfless love expressed by the Son. The Father, in giving the Son, gave of the divine fabric of his own being. The Father emptied himself in love. In this event, among other agonies, a 'sword pierced the Father's soul too' (cf. Lk. 2:35, NIV). As Moltmann writes elsewhere:

> If the Father forsakes the Son, the Son does not merely lose his sonship. The Father loses his fatherhood as well. The love that binds the one to the other is transformed into a dividing curse. It is only as the One who is forsaken and cursed that the Son is still the Son. It is only as the One who forsakes, who surrenders the other, that the Father is still present. Communicating love and responding love are alike transformed into infinite pain and into the suffering and endurance of death.[12]

So we can see the kenosis of the Father in the events of the cross. But we can also see the Father's kenosis in the post-ascension exaltation of the Son. I mean several things by this statement. As I speculated in *Trinity After Pentecost*, the analogy of the parent stooping to lift a child may not be entirely inappropriate.[13] But even if this analogy fails, it can be acknowledged that the Father divested himself of the right to sole glory in lifting the Son to such

10 That the referent of 'finger' and 'power' is the Spirit is contested by Robert P. Menzies (in, e.g., *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994]), but this position has been successfully countered by Max Turner (e.g., in *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996]).

11 Moltmann, *Crucified God*.

12 Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 80.

13 Atkinson, *Trinity After Pentecost*, 132.

heights, to the right hand of his throne (e.g., Acts 2:33). The Father, it seems from early Christian practice, accepted the Son as 'another' divine recipient of believing Christian prayer and worship.[14]

While I write in temporal terms about an event 2,000 years old, these dynamics can be traced into eternity: the eternal generation of the Son was and is the Father's eternal divine choice to empty himself of 'sole rights' to divine glory. In his foreknowledge of the events of the cross, furthermore, the Father's eternal generation of the Son was and is also kenotic. Hans Urs von Balthasar has put this forcibly:

> We shall never know how to express the abyss-like depths of the Father's self-giving, that the Father who, in an eternal 'super-Kenosis,' makes himself 'destitute' of all that he is and can be so as to bring forth a consubstantial divinity, the Son. Everything that can be thought and imagined where God is concerned is, in advance, included and transcended in this self-destitution which constitutes the person of the Father.[15]

We can press this point further. Just as, starting with the events of Pentecost, I found a dynamic reciprocation of kenosis and exaltation unfurling for view, so too in this relationship between the Father and the Son a dynamic reciprocation can be traced. In the eternal generation of the Son, the Father's necessary kenosis leads inexorably to the exaltation of the Son. This is seen in immanent terms, in that the eternally generated Son is divine—the ultimate exaltation.

It is also seen in economic terms, in that in due time the Son's incarnation and crucifixion, which involved the kenosis of the Father as well as the Son, led to the exaltation of the Son in human eyes, following the resurrection and sending of the Spirit. Jesus was in time recognised as divine by those who looked at him with eyes of faith. In turn, too, the kenotic and thereafter exalted Son exalts the Father, both in his spoken praise of the Father during his earthly ministry, and in the eschatological exaltation of the Father that the NT promises (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:28).

It will be noted that I have not sought to decipher a sense in which the Father undergoes kenosis with respect to the Spirit. If this idea does emerge in the economy, I have yet to see it. In terms of God's eternal being, I see a faint hint in the biblical statement that 'God is spirit' (Jn. 4:24). One might also be justified in speculating a kenosis of the Father in his eternal 'spiration' of the Spirit, by way of analogy with the Father's kenosis in generating the Son.

From Irenaeus onwards, great Christian teachers have with good reason referred to the Son and the Spirit as the right and left hands of the Father. Thus analogies can surely be drawn between the two. For example, if it cost the Father, in Balthasar's words, to 'bring forth a consubstantial divinity, the Son', then surely it cost the Father something of his self in bringing forth a consubstantial divinity, the Spirit.

The Father's exaltation of the Spirit can also be seen by way of analogy with the Son. If, in operating his right hand, the Son, the Father also thereby exalts the Son, so too when the Father operates his left hand, the Spirit, he thereby exalts the Spirit. In all of this, I stress, such exaltation could not occur without the Father's kenosis of himself. It requires the Father's kenosis for there to be an eternal Trinity. It requires the Father's kenosis for the Trinity to act towards humanity, and by extension towards the whole created order.

For all that I have been stressing the Father's kenosis in recent paragraphs, I do not wish to do this to the detriment of affirming the Father's exaltation. This can be seen primally: the generated Son and the spirated Spirit are eternally dependent on the Father for their existence. It can be seen in the economy. The Son and the Spirit are sent into this world by the Father. There is no warrant from scripture for speaking of the Son or the Spirit sending the Father. With particular reference to the Son, in his earthly ministry, the Son obeyed the Father (e.g., Heb. 5:7-9), the Son needed the Father (e.g., Jn. 5:19), and so forth. And it can be seen in the eschaton, when the Father will be 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28, where 'God' is clearly the Father). To use the terminology of this article's title, the Father is the 'leader' in the Trinity.

III Equality in the Trinity

By now, my article may have sown confusion about whether I regard the persons of the Trinity as equal. I do, on the simple basis of Christian theism that there is no such thing as semi-divinity or quasi-divinity. Each person of the Trinity is divine and is therefore fully divine. No person is less divine than another, and therefore no person is less than another. But I do not see this equality as a static 'flat' equality. I see it as a dynamic interplay of kenosis and exaltation. Each person humbly lowers self in order to raise the other. Each person, in consequence of such self-abasement, is actually exalted as a result.

A key difficulty that defending equality within the Trinity runs into is its apparent contradiction with the picture presented during Christ's earthly ministry of an incarnate Son who in many ways was subject to the Father (and, arguably, to the leading of the Spirit). This contradiction has been handled in various ways. One way is to regard the persons of the Trinity as equal ontologically but unequal functionally.[16] This apparent explanation of trinitarian relations will not do, for it prises ontology and function unrealistically far apart. In the world of the human, what we are greatly affects what we do; what we do in turn plays a large part in shaping the people we are—so too, presumably, in the world of the divine.

Another apparent explanation would be an appeal to some significant distinction between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity (see above for introductory explanation of these terms). In the economy, the Trinity by this argument displays inequality. But the eternal immanent Trinity (surely the real Trinity?) is equal. The weakness of this explanation is obvious: if the immanent Trinity is actually quite

14 For the early history of the development of devotion to Christ as to God, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003).

15 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* (English Translation; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000 [1970]), viii.

16 This is, in effect, the position espoused by Smail in *Like Father, Like Son*, 76.

different from the economic Trinity, then we have no way of knowing anything at all about the immanent Trinity, and the task of trinitarian theoogy is over.

A third method for explaining the discrepancy between the subordination of Jesus to his Father God and belief in an eternal co-equal Trinity would be to posit that the subordination was displayed only by Christ's human nature, while his divine nature had a quite different relationship to the Father. Again, this apparent explanation is fallacious. Jesus, according to traditional incarnational christology, was one person. The divine nature and human nature did not operate as two independent entities.

Yet another attempt to overcome the problem is to suggest that Jesus submitted to his heavenly Father only temporarily: his resurrection and ascension 'rescued' him from this subordination, which is thus now over.[17] This is clearly no good, for the incarnation of the eternal Word is surely an *accurate*, not a *misleading*, revelation of that Word's eternal relationship with the Father.

By far the most nuanced and well developed explanation of the difficulty is offered by Moltmann and followed by Volf.[18] Yes, they concede: in terms of how, eternally, God 'comes to be' Trinity, one may acknowledge that the Father is the primary cause of the other two. There would be no Son or Spirit without the Father. However, they stress that this 'order of processions' must not be confused with the, so to speak logically subsequent, relations that result between these three divine persons. In these relations—how each person relates to the others—each is equal.

However, as carefully developed as this idea may be, it still suffers from some of the weaknesses of others surveyed above. To distinguish between the Trinity's processions and the Trinity's relations in the way that Moltmann and Volf do seems as artificial and unhelpful as the distinctions that are sometimes drawn between the economic and the immanent Trinity. All our theologising has to gaze at eternity by means of the limited analogies offered to us time-bound mortals through notions conceived from the passage of time.

Moltmann's and Volf's version uses this analogy to place the processions prior to the ongoing relations, as if somehow the processions are past. God now exists—as Trinity—and each person can get on with relating to the others now that the processions are 'over'. It would be better, I suggest, to think of the processions, too, as ongoing. Using the analogy of the passage of time, it is not so much that the Son is now generated and the Spirit now spirated by the Father and those processions are somehow completed. It is better to think of these processions as eternally ongoing. The Son for all eternity owes his divine eternal life to the Father; so too with the Spirit. The Father eternally upholds their divine existence. Naturally, then, it would be artificial to divide this processional relationship from other aspects of interpersonal relations in the Trinity. The Son relates to the Father as eternally dependent. So too does the Spirit.

At the heart of all these apparent explanations is a failure in their initial assumption. This is that 'equality' is something flat and static, such that equality on the one hand, and kenosis involving submission and so forth on the other hand, are mutually exclusive. Only a being that is unequal need submit. A being that is submitted to is superior.

I see a different picture: the Father is the eternally primary cause of the Trinity relationally as well as 'processionally'. To use other language, relevant to this article, the Father is the leader of the trinitarian persons. However, the equality which the Father shares with the Son and the Spirit is maintained by the Father's eternally kenotic relations with them. The Father is ever emptying his own self into and for the exaltation of the others. The Father is a servant-leader.

IV Applying this Trinitarianism

The concept of servant-leadership is familiar in Christian circles and needs little introduction. In recent decades, popular and semi-popular books on Christian leadership have made it a habit to include sections on the subject. Examples include: C. Peter Wagner's *Leading Your Church to Growth*;[19] Philip King's *Leadership Explosion*;[20] Bob Gordon's *Master Builders*;[21] Tom Marshall's *Understanding Leadership*;[22] David Spriggs' *Christian Leadership*;[23] and Hans Finzel's *The Top Ten Mistakes that Leaders Make*.[24] It is immediately apparent from these works that the term 'servant' in this context indicates not so much that servant-leaders are to be servants of God (true as that is, in Christian eyes). Rather, servant-leaders are to be ones who serve those they lead.

This idea has firm gospel support, to which the books listed above repeatedly refer. This support is to be found both in the example of Jesus and in his commands. While the cross itself is the greatest length to which Jesus' example goes in this regard, perhaps the most famous focused act of example is Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet. It is noteworthy that in his attendant comments, the Johannine Jesus does not disparage leadership. He refers to his own leadership and affirms it: 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am' (Jn. 13:13, NIV). It would, admittedly, be reading too much into his next words to imagine that he was calling his disciples to be one another's teachers and lords.

17 So Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

18 Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 165, 176, 177, 183; Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 215-7.

19 Bromley: MARC Europe, 1984. Chapter 3 has sections entitled 'Being Both a Servant and a Leader' and 'Servanthood and Leadership Today'.

20 Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987. Chapter 9 is entitled 'Servant Leadership'.

21 Tonbridge: Sovereign World, 1990. Chapter 7 is entitled 'Called to Serve'.

22 Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991. Chapter 8 is entitled 'How to Become a Servant Leader'.

23 Swindon: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1993. Chapter 2 ('What Makes Leadership Christian?') has a section entitled 'The Servant'.

24 Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994. Chapter 1 is entitled 'The Top-down Attitude'.

Nevertheless, for anyone aspiring to leadership there is a clear call to servanthood: 'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet' (Jn. 13:14, NIV). The same message rings out of the synoptic gospels. In Mark 10, Jesus does not say, 'Whoever wants to become great among you, DON'T!' He says, 'Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant' (Mk. 10:43, NIV). I do not claim that 'becoming great' is the same as 'becoming a leader', but again it must be clear to the conscientious reader that any form of Christian leadership should involve serving those who are thus led.

Towards the end of the previous section, I introduced Moltmann's and Volf's way of arguing for relational equality in the Trinity. To repeat, while the Father is admittedly the sole cause of the Trinity, the processions of the persons are now logically 'over' and the relations enjoyed between the persons are free from the 'superiority' that the Father had from being the cause of those processions (I use grammatical tenses to convey eternal matters, and acknowledge the huge approximations that result). They are therefore uncomplicatedly equal, through an entire reciprocation within the various intratrinitarian relations. To quote Volf, there are 'symmetrical relations within the Trinity'.[25]

From their view of trinitarian equality come important consequences for leadership in the human realm. Moltmann refers to leadership both in society and in the church.[26] Volf restricts his discussion to ecclesial leadership.[27] Their argument is this: as the church—and so also sometimes wider society—believes God to be and behave, this it reproduces in its own being and behaving. The church has too often seen the Trinity as a hierarchy in which the Father is the eternal autocrat. This belief has led to autocratic, abusive rule of the many by the one in the church and in ecclesially influenced societies.

Understandably, both authors criticise this view of leadership. However, neither author denies the usefulness of leadership altogether. Moltmann concedes, concerning ecclesial leadership, that the 'presbyterial and synodal church order and the leadership based on brotherly advice are the forms of organization that best correspond to the doctrine of the social Trinity'.[28] However, his repeatedly insistent vision is for a 'fellowship of men and women without privilege and subjection'.[29] This is fair enough, but when he presses this further and envisages a situation in which 'authority and obedience are replaced by dialogue, consensus and harmony',[30] he does not reflect the church at its best in the NT, in which dialogue, consensus and harmony seemed to be able to live side-by-side with authority and obedience—with active directing leadership.

Volf too acknowledges a place for leadership, or what he calls ordained office. However, he too is unwilling to grant significant leading to officers. Thus for example '*ordination is an act of the entire church led by the Spirit of God*, and not simply of one stratum within the church perpetuating itself'.[31] Again, there is much sentiment here with which I wish to agree. But like Moltmann, Volf goes too far in what he negates, for in denying the possibility of leaders taking the lead in the vital matter of choosing further leaders, Volf so to speak cuts off the life-blood of ongoing leadership.

Both authors write eloquently of the harm hierarchy can do, but both try to swing the pendulum too far the other way, enervating and etiolating leadership while not denying it all together. And both do this with theological appeal to what, as I have noted, Volf calls a 'symmetrical understanding of the relations between the trinitarian persons.'[32] In fact, Volf's use of the term 'symmetrical' flows over into his ecclesiology: 'the more a church is characterized by symmetrical and decentralized distribution of power and freely affirmed interaction, the more it will correspond to the trinitarian communion.'[33]

It seems to me that the answer to the problem that Moltmann and Volf identify is not so much to posit a relationally 'flat', symmetrically egalitarian Trinity, but to posit one in which there is an eternally, relationally leading Father—but a Father who does so kenotically. Yes, the Father is exalted as leader. But this exaltation is dynamically 'balanced' by real kenosis. To use other language, the leading Father is also—or, rather, thereby—a servant.

To apply my thoughts so far to leadership in today's church and society, I can say that leadership is not a 'dirty word'. It is found eternally in the Trinity. Of course, fallen humanity has developed, consciously and unconsciously, all sorts of leadership patterns that have been abusive of those being led. But if the nature of relationships between humans, especially those in Christ, is in any way to enjoy the overflow of divine life and its patterns seen in the Trinity, in answer to Jesus' high-priestly prayer, this will not most helpfully occur through jettisoning leadership and replacing it with leaderless egalitarianism. It will more helpfully occur by seeking a pattern of leadership that enjoys the overflow of divine love seen in the reciprocal dynamic of kenosis and exaltation in and beyond Pentecost.

Thereby, it will also reflect some of the qualities of human relationship for which the NT calls. The gospel accounts, as I have shown, do not suggest that leadership was abhorred by Jesus. But Jesus referred to his own servanthood as a pattern for the leadership of others. Whether we see this pattern of servant-leadership lived out successfully by the first-generation church that produced the NT documents is debatable. Nevertheless, Jesus' high ideal is clear.

My suggestions about the nature of the eternal trinitarian relations lead me to speculate that when Jesus called his followers, if they aspired to leadership, to aspire to servant-leadership, he was not only seeking to apply wise teaching (in, e.g., 1 Kgs. 12:7) to his follow-

25 Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 236.

26 Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 192-202.

27 Volf, *After Our Likeness*, ch. VI.

28 Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 202.

29 Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 165; cf. xiii, 192, 198.

30 Moltmann, *Trinity and Kingdom*, 202.

31 Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 249, italics original; cf. 2.

32 Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 247; cf. 217, 236.

33 Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 236.

ers' lives, but he was also extending to them by way of instruction the pattern he saw in his own heavenly Father's leadership of him. As he sensed the leadership of the Father in his own life to be that of a servant-leader, so too he sought to live out his own servant-leadership of his disciples and then call them to exercise servant-leadership in their relations with each other.

V The Impact of Servant-Leadership

I close this article by considering the impact of servant-leadership. As the Father's kenotic 'leadership' of the Trinity thereby exalts the Son and the Spirit, so too we can expect that the sort of servant-leadership that answers Jesus' high-priestly prayer will lift those who are being led. With one's faith guided by that prayer, one may trust that servant-leadership patterned after the kenotic relation of the Father with the Son and Spirit will have something of the same effects on those led as the Father has on the Son and Spirit.

Jesus' prayer was for a love between people that mirrored in some way the love between Father and Son. So one can surely expect to find a situation in which servant-leadership does not restrict those who are led but rather lifts them further towards the fulfilment of their potential—it 'exalts' them further towards their being all that they can be.

Furthermore, I suggested earlier that without the kenosis of the Father, there would be no Trinity and there would be no economy. The servant-leadership of the Father, in other words, has led to the successful outworking of divine purposes: the kenosis of the Father serves the activities of the Trinity. This 'teamwork' of the Trinity is not destructive of God's activities but enhancing of them. The long-held metaphor of the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of the Father speaks of harmony and coordination in all divine work.

So in the human sphere, when teams and groups are open to having Jesus' high-priestly prayer answered, at least in part, among them, they will see that servant-leadership does not detract from but rather enhances the outworking of that group's or team's purposes. In all this, truly Christian servant-leadership glorifies God and furthers humanity's redemption.

ERT (2014) 38:2, 151-159

Vestigia Trinitatis in the writings of John Amos Comenius and Clive Staples Lewis

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Keywords: Enlightenment, Liberalism, sin, apologetics, Augustine, Neoplatonism, revelation, natural theology, education

In this article I would like to point out several interesting parallels in the theological writings of two great Christian thinkers, divided by three centuries and hundreds of miles of distance. The first is the famous British scholar and apologist, C. S. Lewis (1898 - 1963), the second is the last bishop of the Unity of Brethren (a church founded by the radical and pacifist followers of John Huss in Bohemia) and the famous founder of modern educational science, John Amos Comenius (1592 - 1670).

Their cultural and historical contexts were obviously very different. Comenius was a witness of the tragic Thirty Years War (1618 - 1648) which broke out when he was in his middle twenties and which eventually made him (as a committed Protestant) a lifelong exile and a homeless reformer of educational systems in several European countries. Lewis lived through both world wars and the cultural and political complexities of the twentieth century. Just as Comenius was a witness of the dramatic religious division of Europe following the sixteenth century Reformation culminating in the Thirty Years War, Lewis was a witness of the serious decline of European Christianity (of all creeds and confessions) due to the secularizing processes initiated by the Enlightenment.

I Facing Enlightenment Reductionist Rationalism

In spite of many important differences between these two faithful Christian scholars, we also find a number of striking similarities. When we compare carefully the main works of these two outstanding Protestant writers, there seems to emerge a similar general framework of their theological thought, as will be shown below. Moreover, in spite of all the historical and cultural differences, their intellectual and religious contexts were similar in one important aspect: both Comenius in the seventeenth century and Lewis in the twentieth century were facing

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