

## **The Role of Tradition in Theology**

(Examined in Trinity Developments)

This chapter will examine the basic approaches to the role of tradition in theology (namely: Grand Tradition, Orthodox, Catholic, Reformation Founders & Biblical Theology, Critical, Majority Evangelicalism with Pietism, and Post-Modern). One of the points made in this chapter is that theology often reads the Bible through a theological hermeneutic that thinks of itself as Biblical, but is more often dependent upon the tradition for what the theology sees as within the Bible. For example, Kevin Vanhoozer argues that “the best general hermeneutics is a theological hermeneutics”<sup>1</sup> and he is leading evangelicalism into this approach that understands the Bible through the lens of tradition within his *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*.<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores how theological views of the trinity and the interpretation of the Bible changes based on shifting traditions. I argue that if we are trying to be Biblical in a critical realist

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scriptures & Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

manner, rather than a post-modern traditional sense then some of these traditional approaches help toward this Biblicism and others lead astray.

Additionally, this chapter can be considered to be an extended argument for a Lakatos approach to theology since all these rival approaches to tradition have contemporary adherents. That is, to view this chapter through Kuhnian “normal conventions” is to view these contemporary rival traditions as only historical antecedents which lead to one’s own model of theology climaxing them all, as Hegel did. That approach is rather egocentric with regard to how theology works. This chapter also demonstrates that one’s own method as the climax of methodology is inaccurate as well. The fact that rival research programs continue to emerge shows that a Lakatos’ framework more precisely describes theology as a discipline with its progressive and degenerative research programs.

After each view is explained they will be exemplified by a study of how they handle the trinity issues of generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit, which as a bit of doctrine showcases the traditions’ different rationale and conclusions. The reason for the choice of this doctrine to example the ways these traditions work is grounded in history itself since this is the issue that was the stated reason for the separation of Orthodoxy and Roman Catholic tradition. At this point it is difficult to define the meaning of “generation” and “procession,” because it will shift under the different methods of the role of tradition in theology.

These differences in theory and practice will be examined for their epistemic warrant. This warrant will be shown in three ways: 1) Is each tradition coherent in its own methodology? 2) Are there any contradictory conclusions or meaningless concepts

from any of the views? and 3) Do the views reflect the Biblical text in its context, when they cite references?

The boundary line of tradition plays out in different ways for each domain. On the individual level tradition is a guide and a cause for reflective examination when it is violated. With regard to a school or an organization, there are written traditions which as a matter of integrity should not be crossed but often the more likely area to be violated is a body of oral tradition that is not usually apparent until a person wanders into the mine field and reactions begin to occur. I will examine some of these, especially the Evangelical Theological Society's controversy with respect to the Open Theism.

The term "tradition" comes from the Latin "*traditio*," meaning simply "a handing over." Stephen Holmes adds that "the English word 'trade' captures another facet of the same idea."<sup>3</sup> So whatever Paul describes *as handed to him* by either Judaism or Christ would be "tradition," and *whatever he then hands over to others* is "tradition." By extension, "tradition is the process whereby one generation inducts its successor into its accumulated wisdom, lore, and values."<sup>4</sup>

Exploring into the Biblical text itself, tradition (*παράδοσις*) is a concept that the scribes and Pharisees honor as identified with the elders of Israel (Mt. 15:2; Mk. 7:3, 5). In conversations with them Jesus calls it their tradition and the tradition of men (Mt. 15:3, 6; Mk. 7:9, 13). Paul uses this term of the tradition of men to describe the Colossians heresy which he eschews, to point to Christ as the fullness of deity (Col. 2:8–10). Paul identifies that he was advancing in this tradition of the Jewish fathers but that he was

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Holmes, "The Authority of the Christian Tradition- An Introductory Essay" in *The Practice of Theology: A Reader*, ed. Colin E. Gunton, Stephen R. Holmes, Murray A. Rae (London: SCM Press, 2001), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> David Wells, *No Place for Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 84.

called by Christ to His grace, and thus drifted beyond the bounds of this Jewish tradition (Gal. 1:14). Thus tradition and revelation may diverge. If we today are to follow the pattern that Jesus and Paul set out, when tradition and divine revelation diverge then we are to follow the more authoritative revelation, even if the departure from the tradition means that traditionalists persecute you, as they did to Jesus and Paul. Hopefully, it will not be Christians persecuting each other.

Paul also uses tradition in an affirming way to refer to that which he has taught his followers, especially when this tradition has to do with the practice of responsible living (2 Thess. 2:15). This serves as the basis for his authoritative exhortation to keep aloof from any brother who leads an unruly and undisciplined life, which is not appropriate to the tradition which Paul has conveyed to them (2 Thess. 3:6–9). Here, Paul’s tradition consists especially of his example of hard work and paying his way. Paul’s only other instance in mentioning tradition has to do with our being exhorted to follow Paul’s example as he follows Christ’s example in attempting to edify brethren in contexts where there may be personal disagreement about practices of eating kosher or of food offered to idols or the variance of practice in celebration on certain days (1 Cor. 8:1–11:2). In these areas of disagreement there is liberty, which is restricted by one’s own conscience, as well as Paul’s and Christ’s edifying pattern of hard work in Christian service. There are few universal practices mandated here except guidelines like not doing anything that would cause a brother to stumble, which means that this brother would somehow be destroyed in damnation (1 Cor. 8:9–13, πρόσκομμα and σκανδαλίσω in Paul’s use mean damnation here and elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> cf. Rom. 9:32–33). Such a Pauline sense of tradition would argue against Christians judging the views and practices of a fellow

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<sup>5</sup> This meaning of damnation is supported also in the gospels and Peter as well.

Christian providing it was not actually a sin (e.g., like damning someone as in 1 Cor. 9:3–18 and in the parallel passage especially Rom. 14:4, 13). The Pauline tradition is also sensitive to shaping one’s practice to win more to Christ (1 Cor. 10:33 in context with 11:2). This Pauline sense of tradition would argue for responsible living of diligent work and a sensitive tolerance and edification of others, hoping that more may be saved.

### Grand Tradition

Roger Olson argues that there is a Great Tradition that unifies Christianity.<sup>6</sup> He describes this as “the core of beliefs insisted upon by the majority of early church fathers (as distinct from some of the peripheral notions that individual church fathers developed and promoted as their own).”<sup>7</sup> This strategy could fit itself within Alvin Plantinga’s epistemic approach of basic belief.<sup>8</sup> That is, beliefs are properly basic if a group normally grants them. These beliefs have a communal context for confirming whether the belief is basic. This could be stated as a goal identified by the Vincentian Canon: “What has been believed by everyone (Christians) everywhere at all times.”<sup>9</sup> St. Irenaeus of Lyons lists such a codified “universal rule of faith” that is to be held to in the face of novel teachings.

The Church, though dispersed through the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [she believes] in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the

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<sup>6</sup> Roger Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), pp. 30–48; Alister McGrath joins Olson in this great living tradition view (*A Scientific Theology: Nature* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], vol. 1, pp. 35–45).

<sup>7</sup> Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. especially Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, p. 34 sums up Vincent of Lérins discussion from *The Commonitorium* especially paragraphs 4–6 and 54–59, taken from *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. XI, ed. Phillip Schaff, trans. Edgar C. S. Gibson.

prophets the dispensations of God, and the advents, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father ‘to gather all things in one,’ and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Savior, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, ‘every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess’ to him, that he should execute just judgment towards all; that he may send ‘spiritual wickedness,’ and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may in the exercise of his grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept his commandments, and have persevered in his love, some from the beginning, and others from their repentance, and surround them with everlasting glory.<sup>10</sup>

Irenaeus has left us with an impressive list of common belief, especially where it is merely quoting Biblical phrases. I wonder whether all traditions (such as dispensationalism and Reformed) would agree with the meaning of Irenaeus’ terms like “dispensations.” I wonder also whether many evangelicals would agree with Irenaeus’ view that immortality is granted to those who have certain virtues of character in a relationship with Christ-Irenaeus says for God to “confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept his commandments, and have persevered in his love.” This patristic Two Ways soteriology strategy or *imitatio Chrisiti*, which Irenaeus held as part of his recapitulation view,<sup>11</sup> was extremely widely held in his day<sup>12</sup> but it is not very common in American evangelicalism today. Perhaps only those in evangelicalism who

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<sup>10</sup> St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies* In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson vol. III, sect. 1 paragraph 10.

<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, II.2; III.19.1; cf. Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, pp. 227–29.

<sup>12</sup> Examples include: 2 *Clement*, 1:7; 6:8; 8:4; Ignatius, *Phil.* 5:1-2; *Eph.* 3:1; 5:2; 14:1; *Epistle of Barnabas* 16:7-8; *Shepherd of Hermas* 9:16; 11:5; 30:2; Tertullian, *On Baptism* 1:12; Justin Martyr, *Apology* I.16.8–9; I.61; Tertullian, *Apology* 34; Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, pp. 404–5, 450; *Contra Julianum*, 4.3.33; *De Corrept. Et gratia*, 12.38; *City of God* 14.28; *De Spir. Et litt.* 25.42 for many more examples see Doug Kennard, “The Two Ways Christian Life View: A Historical Sketch” a paper present in the Midwest regional ETS meeting, March 1998.

appreciate John Bunyan's Two Ways soteriology in *The Pilgrim's Progress*<sup>13</sup> would be open to considering these phrases from Irenaeus with his meaning. Roger Olsen told me that in his opinion he had done justice to this view under the chapter "Salvation: Gift and Task."<sup>14</sup> However, his framework shifts salvation to deal with historical perspectives on the subjective application of God's grace, rather than to let the Two Ways framework proposed by the patristics frame the discussion. C. S. Lewis recommended his own version of the consensus of belief in *Mere Christianity*.<sup>15</sup> In the Wheaton Theology conference held in 1998, it was apparent that even this contemporary hero of evangelicalism held to the Two Ways soteriology, which one would expect from his Anglicanism, even though this is out of vogue in mainline American evangelicalism.<sup>16</sup>

Now Olson does not think that such universality of belief is possible but that the basic approaches that attempt to define Christendom are clear enough. For example, the Eastern Orthodox theologians might identify that the beliefs are those "expressed in the decrees of the first seven ecumenical councils." Roman Catholic theologians might add "as they have been received and authoritatively interpreted by the hierarchy of the church in fellowship with the bishop in Rome." It is often taught that this same core of beliefs was rediscovered and embraced by the reformers.<sup>17</sup> Olsen views this historically defined tradition to be a highly regarded secondary authority behind the Bible, much like the Supreme Court is a secondary authority dependant upon the U.S. Constitution. That is,

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<sup>13</sup> John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977).

<sup>14</sup> Roger Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*, pp. 265–286 and conversation with Roger at the American Academy of Religion meeting Nov. 23, 2003 about 3:50 P.M.

<sup>15</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co. 1960).

<sup>16</sup> Doug Kennard, "C. S. Lewis' Narrative Theology Contribution to Two Ways Christian Life View," paper presented at the Wheaton Theology Conference in 1988.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Thomas Oden, *Systematic Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987–1992); D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition & Renewing Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); and James S. Cutsinger, ed. *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics & Orthodox in Dialogue* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

the Bible and the U. S. Constitution do not address contemporary issues. The councils and Supreme Court which *did* address contemporary issues drew heavily upon the principles in these more authoritative sources, but also drew upon other sources as well. His concern for this tradition is to ensure that not just anyone who uses the Bible and claims Jesus can be called Christian; Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons could still be excluded because of their departure from this common patristic and reformation tradition. While Orthodox, Catholic and Protestants want some way of distinguishing the difference between right and wrong belief, they define tradition differently and allow tradition to function differently for theology. I regret that I am pessimistic about this Olsenian, and especially the Vincentian, over-confidence of a grand tradition, as will become apparent with further examination. However, already the grand tradition would include the Two Ways salvation model with adherents from a range of traditions including: Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Episcopalian.

Often those like Olsen who optimistically view a grand tradition do so through the lens of their own tradition. For Olsen, this is the American Methodist and Baptist context, which leaves the Two Way tradition largely excluded. We often do not wish to see the details of the patristics as they are, messy, contradicting, and developing; we often prefer to see them through the filter of our own tradition. However, a critical realist approach to the patristics and to church history will let the historic individuals have their own voice.

This dismissal of a grand tradition does not mean that there are no common beliefs among a proper Christianity. Of course there are common beliefs like: monotheism, and that this personal God created everything, and that Jesus is Lord, and

that Jesus Christ provides a gracious salvation, and that Christ's kingdom resolves that which this life lacks. However, when we investigate the details of what these phrases mean we find that believing Christendom has varieties of ways it considers each of these points. Therefore, one who grants the grand tradition view is setting himself up for either a superficial coverage or a neglect of some of the variety within Christianity. Either way does not accurately describe Christianity in such a model, because we bend it to line up with our own tradition (in a Kuhnian approach). In an attempt to be more specific, as a critical realist, we will now look at different approaches to tradition from a range of Christian branches (reflecting a Lakatos' approach).

### Orthodox

The Orthodox Church emerged with Emperor Licinius' edict of toleration in 313 A.D. and then Constantine's summons from the new capital city Byzantium for the first General Council of the Christian Church to convene at Nicaea in 325 A.D. The seven universal church councils<sup>18</sup> that follow express a church tradition that is claimed to be handed down from the apostles alongside the written Scripture and as the foundational window through which Scripture is accessed. For example, John II, Metropolitan of Russia (1080–89 A.D.) said that “All profess that there are seven holy and Ecumenical Councils, and these are the seven pillars of the faith of the Divine Word on which He erected His holy mansion, the Catholic and Ecumenical Church.”<sup>19</sup> The apostolicity of this tradition is as Basil of Caesarea claims “Of the beliefs and practices whether generally accepted or publicly enjoined which are preserved in the Church some we

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<sup>18</sup> Namely: Nicea 325, Constantinople 381, Ephesus 431, Chalcedon 451, Constantinople 553 and 681, Nicea 787.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 26.

possess from written teaching; others we have received delivered to us ‘in a mystery’ by the tradition of the apostles.”<sup>20</sup> This apostolic tradition had been committed to the Church orally, where it had been handed down from generation to generation, and believed by, as Irenaeus puts it, even those churches which had not received Scriptural manuscripts, and thus it is the apostolic tradition that has kept the Church from error.<sup>21</sup> That is, the faithfulness of this Church tradition is guaranteed by the unbroken succession of bishops in the sees and the councils which go back to the apostles, and that these men are Spirit endowed with “an infallible charism of truth.”<sup>22</sup> For example, against the Gnostics, *tradition* rather than Scripture served to be Irenaeus’ final court of appeal because: 1) among these “infallible” sources of tradition and Scripture, he considered that tradition had spoken more clearly and 2) the heretics were able to make Scripture say what they desired.<sup>23</sup> So for Irenaeus, the Church is delivered from error in its tradition and the tradition delineates the bounds of salvation. The heretics, who appealed to the Biblical text, were repeatedly charged that they would not have shipwrecked had they maintained “the church’s peculiar and traditionally handed down grasp of the purport of revelation”<sup>24</sup> as their anchor (σκοπὸς ἐκκλησιαστικός).<sup>25</sup> This approach may be encouraging in dispensing with a common enemy like Gnosticism but this same approach and justification was reused against the rise of Calvinism in 1672 in the *Confession of*

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<sup>20</sup> St. Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit* In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Blomfield Jackson, vol. VIII, paragraph 66.

<sup>21</sup> Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, 5. praef.; 3.2–5; 3.4.1f in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson vol. 3. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

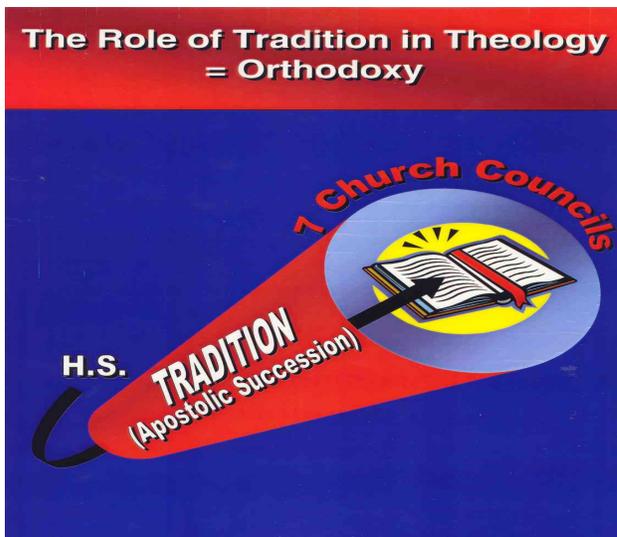
<sup>22</sup> Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, 3.2.2; 3.3.3; 3.4.1; 3.24.1; 4.26.2; 4.26.5 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Irenaeus, de praescr. 13, 19; de virg. Vel. 1; adv. Prax. 2 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3; these views are echoed by Tertullian for the Latin tradition in the same volume 3:252–57, *On Prescription Against Heretics* especially 21, 27, 30.

<sup>24</sup> This phrase was J. N. D. Kelly’s description of Athanasius’ phrase, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1978), p. 47.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.58 in *St. Athanasius Select Works and Letters*. Ed. By Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2003).

*Dositheus*. This Orthodox confession claimed that the Calvinists were in error because the apostolic succession of the bishops (communally enabled by the Holy Spirit) maintained the appropriate truth through which the Church could obtain the infallible interpretation of Scripture.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps their word for us would be that of Alexis Khomiakov, “We are unchanged; we are still the same as we were in the eighth century...Oh that you could only consent to be again what you were once, when we were both united in faith and communion!”<sup>27</sup>



### Exemplified in Trinity Developments

Of course Alexis refers to the controversy over the *filioque* clause<sup>28</sup> as separating Orthodoxy from the Church of the West. The differences of each of these traditions will be shown in how they handle the issues of procession of Spirit and generation of the Son.

<sup>26</sup> *The Confession of Dositheus*, Decree II and XII In *The Acts and the Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem* (sometimes called the Council of Bethlehem, under Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1672; translated from the Greek with an appendix containing the confession published with the name of Cyril Lucar condemned by the Synod and with notes by J. N. W. B. Robertson (London: Baker, 1899); small sections are within Gunton et. al. *The Practice of Theology*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> The Holy Spirit proceeds *from the Son* as well as from the Father.

When Tertullian appropriated the concept of procession from the Stoic belief system to help Christianity make sense of Trinity the concept of procession meant “an extension” as in the economic divine extending Himself from the dominant expression of Father to a second and third *persona* of the Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> In this budding *Logos* Christology, which Orthodoxy embraced, both the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Divine Father, meaning that both Christ and the Holy Spirit were authentically Divine.

Later, Athanasius would write that “*hypostasis* is the same as *ousia*, signifying nothing other than being itself.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, the procession that fosters the *hypostasis* is indicating *the extension of the divine essence*.

Under the influence of neo-platonism’s commitment that all truth is eternal truth, Origen proposed that the three persons were distinct *hypostasis* from all eternity. To explain this fact and to combat modalism, he proposed that the Son was *eternally generated* by the Father.<sup>31</sup> This is reflected at Nicea by Eusebius of Caesarea’s suggestion of his own *Creed of Caesarea* with the statement “Son only-begotten ... begotten of the Father before the ages.” He reasoned that the Son must be begotten before creation because the Son creates everything, but this language did not make it into the *Nicene Creed*. This eternal begetting language finally made it into the second catholic council at Constantinople (381 A.D.) revising the *Nicene Creed* to read (with revision in *italics*):

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<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 4, 5, 7, 8, 11 in *Against Praxeas*. In *The Writings of Quintus Sept. Flor. Tertullianus*. Edited by Richard Ellmann (Kila: Kessinger, 1869–70).

<sup>30</sup> Athanasius, *Ep. Ad Afr.* 4; *De decret.* 27; *de syn.* 41 in *St. Athanasius Select Works and Letters*. Ed. By Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Origen, *Ioh.* 2.10.75; 20.22.182f; 32.16.192f. in *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis in The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Origen’s Commentary on John*. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only begotten, *begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made*, from the substance of the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, Who because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

An even more blatant statement was included within the second canon of *The Canons of the Second Council of Constantinople* (553 A.D.), that is, the fifth catholic council which reads:

If anyone does not confess that the two begettings of God the Word, one before ages, from the Father, timelessly and incorporeally, the other in the last days, the begetting of the same person, who came down from heaven and was made flesh of the Holy and Glorious God-bearer and ever-virgin Mary, and was born of her, let him be anathema.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, the procession of the Holy Spirit was included first in the *Creed of Constantinople* (381 A. D., from the second catholic council) as a statement that He was “from the Father.”<sup>33</sup> This expression began the development of pneumatology beyond the earlier statements dependent upon the *Apostles Creed*, which merely indicates a belief in the Holy Spirit.

So the statements of extended deity through the “Son’s eternal generation” and the “Spirit’s procession from the Father” became normative for Orthodoxy because they are incorporated into the seven catholic creeds of Christianity. Additionally, there appeared to be real development in the ideas of Trinity through Tertullian, Eusebius, and these two catholic creeds. This development would argue against these views being a continuity of the apostolic view. That is, Ireneus’ view of apostolic succession, upon which Orthodoxy has built its dependence of tradition does not stand up to the actual

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<sup>32</sup> Henry Bettenson *Documents of the Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 92.

<sup>33</sup> Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, p. 25, note # 6.

historical facts of the patristic era. The patristics are very diverse and evidence development in their views. That is, Orthodoxy's role of tradition is not sufficiently warranted to indicate that it should be believed, and in such clearly developmental instances the evidence indicates that their confidence in tradition should not be believed. More on the apostolicity question later in the discussion of how Biblical theology takes these concepts.

### Roman Catholic

For Roman Catholicism, tradition is the framework through which the Bible is interpreted as it has been received and authoritatively interpreted by the hierarchy of the church in fellowship with the bishop in Rome, the Pope. This primary honor was given to the bishop of Rome by at least the time of the *Council of Constantinople* of 381 A. D., the second catholic council.<sup>34</sup> It was at this council that the bishop of Constantinople was given second place to the bishop of Rome because Constantinople was the new Rome.<sup>35</sup> Doesn't this mean that Orthodoxy is further at odds with their own tradition, since the bishop of Constantinople is not in fellowship with the Pope, as Alexis Khomiakov mentioned above and yet the second catholic council, accepted by Orthodoxy, places the Pope in a place of higher authority? How can Orthodoxy maintain that they embrace the seven church councils and yet they violate the second council in their practice? This looks practically contradictory to me.

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<sup>34</sup> Julius, Bishop of Rome in 341 A.D., appeals in a letter, from his position in following the tradition of Peter, to the Council of Antioch urging that they restore Athanasius who was wrongly put out. Cf. Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, p. 82.

Returning to Catholicism, the living Pope is granted the role of the maintainer of the tradition, which has the distinct advantage (over historically past councils), in that the Pope can continue to address issues and fold them into the tradition. However, the tradition was closely tied to the councils, which were thought by many to largely be a reflection of Scripture.<sup>36</sup> An exception to this general rule was Basil's reliance upon the liturgy as a compatible tradition that complemented Scripture such as when he tried to demonstrate the deity of the Spirit.<sup>37</sup> Roman Catholic tradition need not be static, but a living and developing expression faithful to the boundaries that the Popes have placed upon it. In defending Augustine's views on free will, Prosper of Aquitaine identifies that Catholics are those who, "profess to follow and to admit only the doctrine sanctioned and taught ...by the Holy See of the Apostle St. Peter through the ministry of its bishops."<sup>38</sup> Prosper appeals to the pronouncements from Pope Innocent, Pope Zosimus and others as settling the issues.<sup>39</sup> Hilary of Poitiers insisted that only those who accepted this church tradition could comprehend what the Bible meant.<sup>40</sup> Augustine considered that the Bible's ambiguous passages could only be cleared up by "the rule of faith" (tradition), and moreover that it was the authority of the church alone that guaranteed the veracity of proper Biblical interpretation.<sup>41</sup> Leo I identified that the authority of the other bishops derived immediately from the fellowship that they had with the bishop of Rome.

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<sup>36</sup> E.g., Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 5:12 in *The Works of Cyril of Jerusalem* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1969–70); Augustine, *Serm. Ad. Cat.* 1; Cassian, *De incarn.* 6.3 in *John Cassian, The Institutes* (New York: Newman Press, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> Basil, *De Spir. Sanct.* 16, 66 in *On the Holy Spirit* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980).

<sup>38</sup> Prosper of Aquitaine: *Defense of St. Augustine* in *Ancient Christian Writers*, series no. 32, trans. P. de Letter (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1963), pp. 178–85, especially the introduction but similar statements also appear in article 7 and 8.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., Prosper, *Defense of St. Augustine*, article 1 and 5.

<sup>40</sup> Hilary, *In Matt.* 13.1 in *Sur Matthieu* (Paris: Cerf, 1978).

<sup>41</sup> Augustine, *De doct. Christ.* 2.12; 3.2; *C. ep. Manich.* 6; *c. Faust. Manich.* 22.79 in *Jésus-Christ mort et ressuscité pour nous.* ed. Suzanne Poque (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986).

Nicholas I wrote that no higher appeal could be made than to the papal see in Rome and that he could override other councils.<sup>42</sup> The eighth century document *The Donation of Constantine* grants the Pope the right to rule under heaven for the full extent of Constantine's reign, even though in the fifteenth century Lorenzo Valla demonstrated that it was a forgery.<sup>43</sup> Over the next few centuries (eighth to thirteenth centuries) in the struggle over the appointment of officials the Popes Gregory VII and Innocent III excommunicated kings Henry IV and John of England and their subjects until they would repent and resubmit to the Pope. In the midst of this conflict, Pope Gregory VII clarified in *The Dictations of the Pope*,<sup>44</sup> that the Pope is the supreme human authority, namely:

- 1) The Church of Rome is founded by God alone with the universal bishop, and has never erred and never will.
- 2) The Pope can depose, reinstate, transfer bishops to another see. The Pope can create new sees, make new laws, call general councils. His decrees can be annulled by no one, but he can annul the decrees of anyone.
- 3) The Pope has the power to depose emperors for he holds the supreme court of appeal.
- 4) The Pope as emperor requires all, even kings, to do homage to him for he is judged by no one.

The Council of Trent canonized Papal authority as authoritative “unwritten tradition,” which was received from Christ and apostles as by the Holy Spirit, along with the Scriptures.<sup>45</sup> When the discussion moved to the mass, then in addition to apostolic tradition, an appeal to the “pious regulations of holy pontiffs” is added.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nicholas I, *Preposueramus quidem*, written in 867 A.D. and contained in Bettenson, pp. 94.

<sup>43</sup> Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, pp. 98–101.

<sup>44</sup> A number of these *Dictations of the Pope* are contained in Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, pp. 101–116.

<sup>45</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: Original Text with English Translations*, trans. and ed. By H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1941), Fourth Session, April 8, 1546, Decree Concerning Canonical Scriptures, pp. 17–18.

<sup>46</sup> *Council of Trent*, Twenty-Second Session, under the Supreme Pontiff, Pius 4, Sept. 17, 1562, Doctrine Concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass, Chapter 4, pp. 147–8.

However, the thirty years war divided up Europe between Rome and the Reformation, thus in bloody fashion ending *the* church in Europe, replacing it by competing church voices. During this same tumultuous time Descartes pioneered the role of reason in criticism as arbiter for all human thought and judgment.

As philosophical and Biblical criticism unraveled the authority of the Church tradition, those loyal to the Roman Catholic Church found papal authority was particularly canonized in the first Vatican Council which identified that when the Pope spoke “ex cathedra” (from his throne or chair) that such pronouncements were in fact infallible. So the pronouncements of Mary’s immaculate conception pronounced by Pius IX in 1854 and the assumption of Mary, pronounced by Pius XII in 1950 are then official infallible doctrines in Catholic theology. In the Second Vatican Council, from *Dei Verbum*<sup>47</sup> the teaching of the Scriptures is authoritatively restricted to the teaching office of the Church and as such tradition is combined with the sacred Scripture as the authoritative Word of God.

9. Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For sacred Scripture is the Word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, while sacred tradition takes the Word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this Word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.

10. Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit the entire holy people united with their shepherds remain always steadfast in the teaching of the

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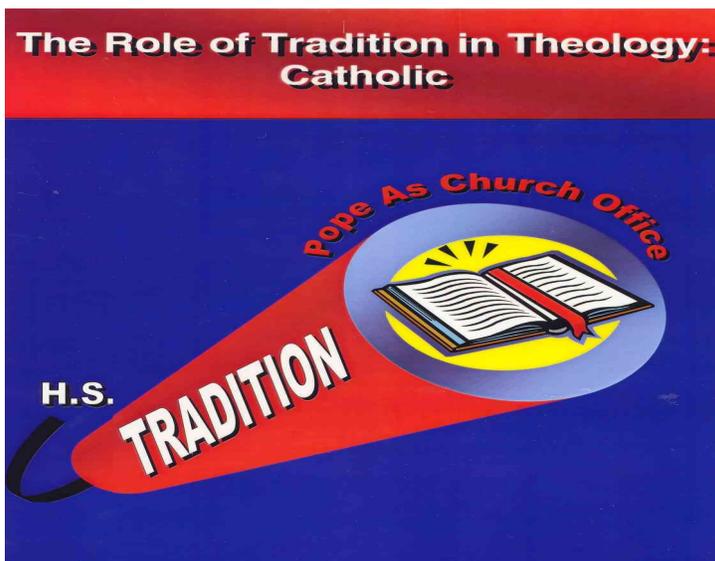
<sup>47</sup> *The Second Vatican Council, Dei Verbum*, chapter 2 “Handing on Divine Revelation,” paragraphs 9 and 10.

Apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread and in prayers (see Acts 8:42), so that holding to, practicing and professing the heritage of the faith, it becomes on the part of the bishops and faithful a single common effort.

But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the Word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.

This authoritative tradition together with the authority of the Pope was ignored by the United States Catholics, when the Pope made his pronouncement against birth control. Average Catholics in America asked. "What does the Pope know about family and birth control?" With repeated "out of touch" pronouncements and the 1960's assailing most authorities in life, tradition as authoritative in the Roman Catholic Church is on the ropes. Now the authority of the Pope is further pummeled under charges of pedophile priests and Episcopal malfeasance.



## Exemplified in Trinity Development

In response to the Arian controversy the Cappadocians (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa) tried to distinguish the mode of origination of the Son and the Spirit. For example, Basil employed the Orthodox framework that the Son's generation and the Spirit's being breathed out of God's mouth are both ineffable but true.<sup>48</sup> He further teaches that the one Spirit "is linked with the one Father through the one Son;" it is through the Son that the divine qualities reach the Spirit from the Father.<sup>49</sup> On the basis of John 15:26 in contrast to John 1:14 and verse 18, Gregory of Nazianzus maintained that the Spirit proceeded from the Father whereas the Son is generated by the Father.<sup>50</sup> However, Gregory of Nyssa provided the definitive statement; the Spirit "is out of God and is of Christ; He proceeds out of the Father and receives from the Son; He cannot be separated from the Word."<sup>51</sup> This Orthodox procession view is a short step from the double procession view which was accepted in the West. The Cappadocians claim that there is one Godhead (*ousia*) and three *hypostasis*.<sup>52</sup> Jerome, who takes *hypostasis* in the orthodox manner as "essence," was alarmed at the way the Cappadocian Fathers were using it in these statements and wrote to Pope Damasus in 376 A.D. admitting he is in the chair of Peter, the Rock upon which the Church is built.<sup>53</sup>

In the West, Victorinus, the Neo-Platonic philosopher took up the defense of the *homoousion* (same essence) view against the Arians. He held that God is eternally in

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<sup>48</sup> Basil, *De spir. Sanct.* 46 in *On the Holy Spirit*. Ed. David Anderson. (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980).

<sup>49</sup> Basil, *De spir. Sanct.* 45 and 47.

<sup>50</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 31.7–8 in *Select Orations* Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 262, referring to Gregory's statement in *C. Maced.* 2; 10; 12; 24 and *Ib.* 2–4.

<sup>52</sup> Basil, *Ep.* 8.3; 38.8 in *Letters* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1951–55); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 21.14; 42.15 in *Select Orations*; also Didymus, *de trin.* 1.16 (*PG* 39.336).

<sup>53</sup> Jerome, *Ep.* 15, cf. Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, pp. 80–81.

motion, His essence being equivalent to that of a perpetual mover, so that the eternal generation shows the perpetuity of the movement of the Son and the potency of the Father to move the Son.<sup>54</sup>

This perspective of Victorinus was very influential on Augustine, who formulated what became the mature standard view for the West in his volume *De trinitate*. Augustine sees that the distinction of the persons is grounded in mutual relations within the Godhead. This concept of relation clarifies that it is not three essences or three accidents in the Aristotelian philosophical categories but three real eternal relations (*aliquid relation*).<sup>55</sup> Therefore, *the relations within the Godhead are*: the Father is *eternally begetting*, the Son is *eternally begotten*, and the Spirit is *eternally proceeding* or being bestowed within the Godhead. Of course, Augustine brings much more to the Trinity than this, but the critical move from conceiving of the persons as *extensions of the Divine* (Orthodoxy) to conceiving the persons as *equal related Ones within the Divine* (Western) has been made.

It is this eternal relatedness of equal person within the Trinity that sets up the West for the next move in appreciating the *filioque* clause, that the Spirit proceeds *also from the Son*, and not just from the Father. This clause had been floated at the Council of Toledo (447 A.D.), but first emerged in a creed of the Church in the rewording of the Creed of Constantinople recited at the third Council of Toledo (589 A.D.).<sup>56</sup> This clause gained popularity in the West as explaining the eternal relationships of Son and Spirit and

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<sup>54</sup> Victorinus, *Adv. Ar.* 1.43; 3.7; 4.20–21; *De gen. Verb.* 2; 29–30; *Ib.* 1.31; 1.41; 4.20 in *Theological Treatises on the Trinity* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1981).

<sup>55</sup> Augustine, *de trin.* Bks. 5–7; *Ioh. Tract.* 39; *enar. In ps.* 68.1.5; *ep.* 170; 238–41; *de civ. Dei* 11.10.

<sup>56</sup> Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, p. 25, note 6.

thus clarifying a distinction from each other. It was inserted in most versions of the creed except when Leo III refused it in 809 A.D.

As political tensions of the Eastern and Western church rose over Papal authority, Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, charged the West and Nicholas I with innovation in an attempt to discredit the Pope. In 867 A.D., as the Latin rites with its “double procession of the Spirit” were introduced into the Church of Bulgaria, Photius attacked them. That same year the Council of Constantinople declared the Roman Church as heretical and excommunicated Pope Nicholas. This breach was patched up for a time around 920 A.D. but as the emperor began to side more closely with the Roman pontif, Pope Leo IX, the metropolitan from Constantinople Michael Cerularius decided for schism (the Eastern church left the West over the West’s innovative heresy) and anathematized them, making the schism complete.<sup>57</sup>

### Reformation Founders & Biblical Theology

By 1517 A.D., corruption within the Roman Catholic Church was ripe, and Tetzel’s selling of forgiveness was a prime expression of it. Luther’s 95 Theses confronted this corruption in the church. Called to Worms to defend his teaching, Luther was barraged with learned quotes from patristics and Popes, to which Luther responded,

Unless I am convicted of error by the testimony of Scriptures or (since I put no trust in the unsupported authority of Pope or of councils, since it is plain that they have often erred and often contradicted themselves) by manifest reasoning I stand convicted by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God’s word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against

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<sup>57</sup> Michael Cerularius, *terra pax hominibus*, in Sept. 1053, cf. Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, pp. 96–7.

conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.<sup>58</sup>

Three clear contrasts are made in this statement with what had gone before, namely: 1) The tradition of Popes, fathers, and councils is contradictory and thus not worthy to be trusted on its own merits, 2) the Bible itself is accessible without the filtering of the tradition, and 3) the individual could access this Word of God and understand it. Pope Leo X twice excommunicated Luther chronologically before this above statement (in autumn, 1520, and January, 1521 A.D.) but with this statement Emperor Charles V announced his intent to suppress this heresy. However, the Reformation was already out of the bag. As such, Luther repeatedly affirmed the authority and accessibility of the Bible, even for the individual interpreter.<sup>59</sup> Melancthon and his fellow Lutherans followed suit in affirming all three points rather acutely in *The Augsburg Confession* (1530 A.D.), especially in section 28 on “The Power of Bishops.”<sup>60</sup>

Ulrich Zwingli joins this Reformation spirit in which there is confidence in the authority and accessibility of the Word of God. A few citations from his *The Sixty-Seven Articles* of (1523 A.D.) demonstrate this fact.

I, Ulrich Zwingli, confess that I have preached in the worthy city of Zurich these sixty-seven articles or opinions on the basis of Scripture, which is called *theopneustos* (that is, inspired by God). I offer to defend and vindicate these articles with Scripture. But if I have not understood Scripture correctly, I am ready to be corrected, but only from the same Scripture.<sup>61</sup>

A sample of the articles shows that Zwingli also fights against the vacuousness of tradition and impotence of the Roman Catholic clergy. Notice also his confidence in the

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<sup>58</sup> The translation at *The Diet of Worms, 1521, Luther's Final Answer*, 18 April Op. Lat. vi.8 Kidd, No. 42; also in Bettenson, *Documents of the Church*, pp. 199–201.

<sup>59</sup> Dozens of examples of these points are contained in brief in *A Compend of Luther's Theology*, ed. Hugh T. Kerr (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 3–20.

<sup>60</sup> Especially in the first four paragraphs of this section.

<sup>61</sup> A copy of this is in *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, ed. Mark Noll, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), p. 39.

clarity of the Word of God, and that the Spirit's role is that of converting the listener to the Word of God by the clarity of the Bible.

11. From this we see that so-called ecclesiastical traditions with their pomp, imperiousness, social standing, titles, and laws are a source of all kinds of madness since they do not agree with the head [Christ].

12. Therefore, they rage on, but not for the sake of the head. By God's grace, attention has been drawn to this fact in our day. They will not be allowed to rage on forever, but will be brought to listen to the head alone.

13. Where people heed the Word of God, they learn the will of God plainly and clearly, they are drawn to him by his Spirit, and they are converted to him.

14. Therefore, all Christians should exercise the greatest diligence to see that only the gospel of Christ is preached everywhere.

15. For in believing the gospel we are saved, and in believing not we are condemned, for all truth is clearly contained in it.

16. In the gospel we learn that the teachings and traditions of men are of no use for salvation.<sup>62</sup>

The document comes to an end with, "But let no one undertake to argue with sophistry or human wisdom, but let Scripture be judge (Scripture breathes the Spirit of God), so that you can either find the truth or, if you have found it, hold on to it. Amen. God grant it!"<sup>63</sup>

Calvin likewise joins in the confidence of the clarity and sufficiency of the Word of God to develop and defend theology and practice. He maintains an internal view of knowledge rooted in the heart, which sets a trajectory between the dogmatic unthinking of tradition (especially Roman Catholic tradition informed by papacy), and speculation (which explores vain or useless things).<sup>64</sup> So for Calvin, knowledge consists especially of the Word of God, personally owned in a manner that brings about real life change. For example, the first article of *The Geneva Confession* (1536 A.D.)<sup>65</sup> reads as follows:

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<sup>62</sup> Noll, *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>63</sup> Noll, *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, p. 46.

<sup>64</sup> John Calvin, Sermon no. 103 on Job, 521-22; *Commentaries*, 1 Thess. 5:21; cf. William Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 159.

<sup>65</sup> A copy of this is present in Noll, *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, p. 126.

## 1. The Word of God

First, we affirm that we desire to follow Scripture alone as the rule of faith and religion, without mixing with it any other thing which might be devised by the opinion of men apart from the Word of God, and without wishing to accept for our spiritual government any other doctrine than what is conveyed to us by the same Word without addition or diminution, according to the command of our Lord.

Calvin emphasizes the authority of the Bible supremely. The Spirit is seen as inspirationally inseparable with this Word of God, and thus there is no rival alternative authority.<sup>66</sup> With regard to councils of the church, Calvin views them as an opportunity to reflect on the issues and opinions conveyed and to consider what the council decided and why.<sup>67</sup> However, the authority remains in the Bible itself.

Thus councils would come to have the majesty that is their due; yet in the meantime Scripture would stand out in the higher place, with everything subject to its standard. In this way, we willingly embrace and reverence as holy the early councils, such as those of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus I, Chalcedon, and the like, which were concerned with refuting errors- in so far as they relate to the teachings of faith. For they contain nothing but the pure and genuine exposition of the Scripture.<sup>68</sup>

Calvin's opinion is that the church tradition that has developed since these foundational views was not helpful because the church had "degenerated from the purity of that golden age."<sup>69</sup> However, Calvin left his followers with *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* as an interpretive tool to aid in walking between the interpretive anarchy of the heretics and interpretive monarchy of the Pope.

The heritage of these Reformers can be traced in two ways from here. 1) The spirit of the Reformers and their methodology largely extends through the radical

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<sup>66</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, n.d.), ch. 8, paragraph 13.

<sup>67</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, ch. 9, paragraph 8.

<sup>68</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, ch. 9, paragraph 8.

<sup>69</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, ch. 9, paragraph 8.

reformers into the Biblical theologians. While the product of much of the magisterial Reformers thought is preserved within evangelicalism.

Each step and generation extend this Biblicism to rethink the Western tradition and reframe it in a profoundly Biblical pattern. One example of this development is the absence of a Holy Spirit illumination view which is not proposed until it emerged among Lutheran pietism when Phillip Jakob Spener replaced the concept of verbal inspiration of the Scriptures with a personal inspiration or illumination of the believing interpreter.<sup>70</sup>

This ushered in one of the most violent controversies which orthodox reformation thought had against pietism. In 1685 A.D., Johann Quenstedt reframed the view as one of interpretation and not of inspiration.<sup>71</sup> In 1707 A.D. David Hollanz embraced the view that the Holy Spirit is promised to every Christian so that they might understand the

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<sup>70</sup> Philipp Jakob Spener, *Consilia Et Judicia Theologia* (Frankfurt a.M., 1709), vol. 3, p. 700; Cf. K. James Stein, “Phillip Jakob Spener (1635–1705)” and Markus Matthias, “August Hermann Franke (1663–1727)” in *The Pietist Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth Centuries*. edited by Carter Lindberg (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 88 and 105-6; Johannes Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1970), pp. 92-96; Emmanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuen Evangelische Theologie in Zusammenhang mit den allgemein Bewegung des Europäischen Denkens* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1951), vol. 2, p. 114; Volker Jung, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift. Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung bei Abraham Calov* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1999), pp. 100–1.

<sup>71</sup> Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* (Wittenberg: Johanne Ludolph Quenstedt, 1685). The relevant portion (chapters 1–3) of this is available in English as: *The Nature and Character of Theology: An Introduction to the Thought of J. A. Quenstedt from THEOLOGIA DIDACTICO-POLEMICA SIVE SYSTEMA THEOLOGICUM*. abridged, edited, and translated by Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986), ch. I “Of Theology in General”: question I “Is Theology Given?” paragraph XI, p.36; ph. XIV, p. 39; ph. XXXI-Observe (1), p. 54; ph. XXXV, p. 57; Section II “Polemic”-“Sources of Rebutals or Dialysis of Objections”: q. I “Is Theology Given?”, pp. 64–5; q. II “Is Revealed Theology Necessary in the Church?”, pp. 71, 72–3; q. III “Is Theology a God-Given Practical Aptitude?”, exposition III & IV, pp. 73–4; rebuttal I, p. 80; ch. III “Of the Sources of Theology”, porism IV, pp. 199–200. Stanley Grenz, in *Beyond Foundationalism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 99 claims that this illumination view originated earlier by at least the time of John Hus and cites George Tavard in *Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), pp. 47-66 which discusses John Hus’ view of the soteriological transformation in which the Holy Spirit enables the new believer to be applicationally responsive to the Word of God. From my reading of the Hus material, I agree with Tavard, contrary to Grenz; Hus does not teach this view of the illumination through the Holy Spirit aid to cognitively understand the Bible. I have not found the view any earlier than Spener’s pietistic Lutheran systematic theology.

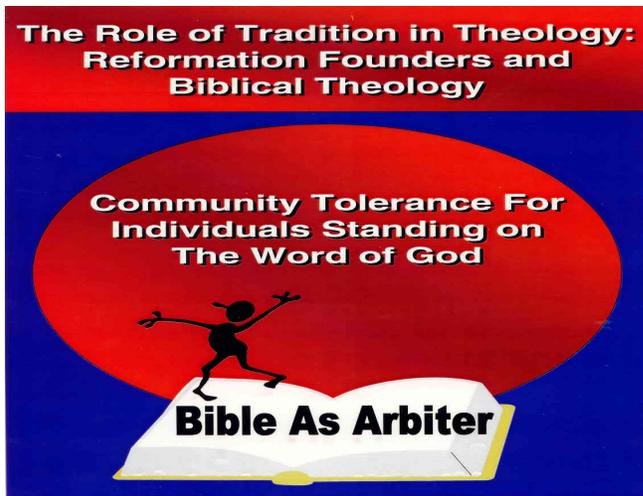
Biblical text better.<sup>72</sup> August Herman Franke introduced the illumination of the Spirit as *sensus mysticus* around 1701, publishing the idea in 1709 and then more fully in 1717 A.D.<sup>73</sup> As such pietism sees the Holy Spirit is promised to every Christian so that he might better understand the Biblical text. So this concept of illumination, so common in evangelicalism is absent from the Reformers. That is, in place of the Spirit leading the councils and the Pope in Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, the Reformers identified that the Bible was the accessible arbiter for doctrine.

So the *methodology* of the Reformers, today is carried on by the Biblical theologians, while the *product* (the continuing tradition of the Reformers views), with some novelties (such as illumination) remains within evangelicalism. That is, the product of the Reformers (like descriptions of the Trinity) began to be crystallized and catechized by the creeds that the Reformers expressed. These creeds emerged as a new complimentary tradition through which the concept of tradition is viewed, as will be developed within the section on mainstream Evangelicalism. However, first consider a further look at the spirit of the Reformers as reflected by the Biblical theologians.

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<sup>72</sup> David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum* was published in 1707 but is available as *Acromaticum Universam Theologiam Thetico-Polemicam Complectens* (Lipsiae: B.C. Breitkopfii, 1763).

<sup>73</sup> August Hermann Franke, *Praelectiones Hermeneuticae, ad Exponendi Sensum Scripturae S. Theologiae Studiosis Ostendendam Adiecta est in Fine Brevis et Lvcvlenta Scriptvram S. cvm Frvty Legendi Institvtio* (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1710), p. 57; cf. Markus Matthias, "August Hermann Franke (1663-1727)" in *The Pietist Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth Centuries*, edited by Carter Lindberg (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 106–7.



In contrast to the confessional reformation and pietism, the descriptive Biblical theology movement emerged and was given expression by Johann Philip Gabler's lecture at the University of Altdorf in 1787 A.D.<sup>74</sup> Gabler's approach offered an optimistic empirical spirit that the meaning of the text was accessible to individuals from the straightforward study of the Biblical text's details. The descriptive cataloging of the details of the Biblical text would then be used by Gabler to construct a new inductive tradition within Dogmatic theology. The confidence that a commentator can approach the Biblical text in a descriptive manner is still with us in a more nuanced subjective way, as in K. Stendahl's article about contemporary Biblical Theology in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, which calls the contemporary commentator to describe the meaning of the Biblical text in the original context.<sup>75</sup> However, in his day, Gabler was aware of subjective aspects as he discussed some who in their Biblical theology

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<sup>74</sup> Gabler's lecture 'On the proper distinction between Biblical and dogmatic theology and specific objectives of each,' is translated and commented on in John Sandys-Wunsch and Laurence Eldredge, 'J. P. Gabler and the Distinction Between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology: Translation, Commentary, and Discussion of his Originality,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33(1980):133-58 and also in *The Flowering of O. T. Theology*, eds. Ben Ollenburger, Elmer Martens, Gerhard Hasel (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 492-502.

<sup>75</sup> K. Stendahl, 'Biblical Theology, Contemporary,' *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1:418-32.

occasionally got re-entangled with dogmatic theology, and warned against this.<sup>76</sup> For such a discipline as Biblical theology, the tradition that is most binding is first to have a basic methodology of reflecting the Biblical text wherever it will lead. Or the goal in Biblical theology as I state it is, “to be as clear as the text is clear and to be as ambiguous as the text is ambiguous.” Such a methodology is a progressive tradition that identifies with a heritage of attempts in the past but always goes beyond them to some extent in that each interpreter places his study within the landscape of those who have gone before him in this discipline. So both the content and the organizing principles try to reflect what the text says. This heritage can be reflected by statement of methodology to which I identify, like my own statement in the later chapter, “The Reef of the Old Testament,”<sup>77</sup> or Gerhard Hasel’s books on Biblical theology methodology, which I have often used to teach the methodology of this discipline.<sup>78</sup> One’s heritage can also be identified by the individual contributors who interpret similarly. For me, that means those major Biblical theology frameworks within which I work, and have my students read, like: Eichrodt,<sup>79</sup> Vos,<sup>80</sup> Smith,<sup>81</sup> House,<sup>82</sup> Goldingay,<sup>83</sup> Merrill,<sup>84</sup> and Waltke<sup>85</sup> for Old Testament, and

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<sup>76</sup> Gabler, in *The Flowering of O.T. Theology*, p. 495.

<sup>77</sup> Originally presented as an Evangelical Theological Society paper: Doug Kennard, “The Reef of the O.T.: A Method for Doing Biblical Theology that Makes Sense for Wisdom Literature,” 2000, included as a later chapter in this book.

<sup>78</sup> Gerhard Hasel *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972, fourth edition 1991) and *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). A progressive look at the discipline is evident in a volume like *The Flowering of O. T. Theology*.

<sup>79</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* in two volumes (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961, 1967).

<sup>80</sup> Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).

<sup>81</sup> Ralph Smith, *Old Testament Theology: Its History, Method, and Message* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993).

<sup>82</sup> Paul House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1998).

<sup>83</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1 *Israel’s Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003) and vol. 2 *Israel’s Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

<sup>84</sup> Eugene Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Louisville: Broadman and Holman, 2006).

Ladd,<sup>86</sup> Wright,<sup>87</sup> and Dunn<sup>88</sup> for the New Testament. This is a helpful way to identify an *interpretive tradition*<sup>89</sup> which frames a trajectory from which future work will be attempted, without requiring the past conclusions to exclude what the Bible actually claims in the text. Likewise, this methodological dimension is a major contribution that Biblical theology brings from the Biblical text as well, in its attempt to reflect the content within progressive revelation.

When in November, 2002, I. H. Marshall addressed the Institute for Biblical Research on developing theology from hermeneutics,<sup>90</sup> his first two points reflected this nature of progressive revelation. For example, he pointed out that Matthew 10 restricts the evangelism of Jesus followers to be among the house of Israel, while Matthew 28 exhorts to go to the Gentiles. However, when there is a larger gap of time like early O.T. books to the N.T. there may be even a greater revelational development. In such cases, my preference is to develop each text consistent to its contextual revelation stage, and thereby show the real development within the Biblical text. The warrant then comes from the authoritative Biblical text, but there is some corroborative evidencing provided by those scholarly commentators who also are trying to be true to the text. As each one floats their next contribution to the discipline, if the community of scholars resonate with these new ideas then the community provides a sense of reassurance to these new

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<sup>85</sup> Bruce Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

<sup>86</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, 1993).

<sup>87</sup> N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis Press: Fortress Press, 1992), *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

<sup>88</sup> James Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Richard Lints does this same approach with several of the same individuals in *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), pp. 139–190. I. H. Marshall (in “Developing Theology from Hermeneutics,” IBR paper, Nov. 2002) also sees a cross-section tradition, the faith given to the church, as the doctrinal view of the Christian mind, which is used to test prophets and orthodoxy. These papers are now in book form as I. H. Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

<sup>90</sup> I. H. Marshall, “Developing Theology from Hermeneutics,” IBR paper, Nov. 2002.

statements of Biblical theology and the discipline moves forward. Other responses from the community of scholars may also come, including attempts to defeat new views and various levels of engagement or disengagement. To the extent that these views become acknowledged to be dissonant to the views of those who are committed to the discipline of Biblical theology, then it should be taken as a warning to hear the replies that the others make and consider them seriously with greater study in the text. But, such dissonance does not necessarily indicate that the views are wrong or else no development would ever be undertaken, and the Reformation spirit which founds this discipline would be quashed. In the end, the Reformers were right in views, not because others agreed, but because they aligned themselves with the Biblical text.

It is hypothetically possible for some person to discover what the Bible says and not be able to find a living scholar who agrees with him. In such a condition, the scholar should seek out specialists to help him think through each point in his model. The specialists become a community of scholars that transcends our confessional traditions. Provided the community of scholars tolerates his view, it can still be maintained. Provided the community of scholars agrees with the Biblical rationale apparent within a Biblical theology view, then there is reassurance that one's views are likely to be correct. This role of a scholarship community is difficult to maintain today in either our individual oriented society or our local and confessional communities, but it identifies why we need to be in colleges and academic organizations where we share our ideas among colleagues. The community as sounding board helps to clarify and warrant the basic beliefs of both Biblical theologians and exegetes.

### Exemplified in Trinity Development

This methodology can be sampled by returning to our issue of Trinity. Few of the Reformers deviate from the Western Church tradition on these Trinitarian issues, but Calvin is one who dismisses the Nicene Fathers' speculations. As Warfield summarizes it, "It is enough, he says in effect, to believe that the Son derives from the Father, the Spirit from the Father and the Son, without encumbering ourselves with a speculation upon the nature of the eternally generating act to which these hypostases are referred."<sup>91</sup>

However, the Biblical theologians go further; few Biblical theologians think that Trinity is even a Biblical theological concept. One of the minority of Biblical theologians who grants Trinity as Biblical is Donald Guthrie.<sup>92</sup> Following this methodology, we are now entering into a minority position within this discipline. However, I think that the form of epistle used in the first century has been appropriated by at least Peter to accentuate an intentional Trinitarian concept of God in the text, by twice reiterating the threeness of God: in the description of the recipients (1 Pet. 1:2), and again in the longer blessing (1 Pet. 1:3–12).<sup>93</sup> Additionally, it is reassuring that other Biblical theologians like I. H. Marshall concur with this same line of exegesis.<sup>94</sup> I do, therefore grant that a basic concept of a Trinity is being developed in the text. However, the concept is not so developed as the early church or as most of the Reformers propose.

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<sup>91</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974), p. 250.

<sup>92</sup> Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981), pp. 112–114.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Douglas Kennard, "The Doctrine of God in Petrine Theology" Th. D. Dissertation for Dallas Theological Seminary, 1986, pp. 137, 180–87.

<sup>94</sup> I. H. Marshall, *First Peter* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), pp. 31–32, 34–48.

I am unaware of any Biblical theologian who develops generation and procession as Biblical theology concepts. These are areas of systematic theology. However, there are passages that the church has used to teach the ideas of procession and generation, and scholarly exegetes do handle them. So there is benefit in exploring what these texts say and comparing it to what the specialists claim that the texts mean, which is the direction we will now take for this study.

The passages to which appeals are made to teach eternal generation are: John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9. Each of these passages has within it the critical word *μονογενῆς*. This word *μονογενῆς* elsewhere in the Bible means “only child” as the case of the only child of a synagogue official that needs Jesus healing or Abraham’s only child of promise, whom God has commanded to be sacrificed (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb. 11:17). However, in John the word is used exclusively of Jesus Christ with reference to His unique historical birth as the revelatory Word, to reveal God through the flesh. For example, John 1:14 describes the unique birthing process as the incarnation of Christ’s humanity in flesh so that He as the Word could reveal the divine glory historically through His humanity. The fact that the Word is God (Jn. 1:1) means that the uniquely born God (divine One adding humanity in his birth) is uniquely enabled to explain the Father, which explanation took place in the historical incarnation prior to John’s writing his gospel (the aorist *ἐξηγήσατο*; Jn. 1:18). This uniquely born Word (incarnated or born for the purpose of revealing the Father) has revealed God and after the ascension (as John is writing<sup>95</sup>), the divine Word interpenetrated the anthropomorphic breast (*κόλπον*) of the Father. The Father gives the uniquely born (*μονογενῆς*) Son of

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<sup>95</sup> ὧν the present tense of *εἶμι*, indicates a present relationship, but not a continued enwombment that would indicate that the unique birth in this context had not happened because, in fact, with the incarnation the unique birth occurs.

God (in His incarnation coming into the world) for men to believe in Him and thereby obtain everlasting life (Jn. 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9). Since the Biblical texts used to defend the doctrine of generation emphasize *μονογενῆς* to be the historical birthing of Jesus' humanity in incarnation, it is best to reject the ancient tradition, that Jesus Christ was generated before all ages in eternity. As a historical oddity "eternal generation" does not reflect the Bible. At this point, the unanimous voice of scholarly commentators agree,<sup>96</sup> further confirming the exegetical view that the generation of the Son should be Biblically understood as an initiation of an economic ministry of the divine Word incarnating to reveal the Father through His humanity.

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<sup>96</sup>E.g., D. Moody, "God's only Son: the translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version" *JBL* 72(1953): 213–19; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Waco: Word Publishers, 1987), pp. 14–16, 51; Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John i–xii*, vol. 29 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 13–14, 30–34, 129, 134; *The Epistles of John*. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1982), pp. 516–17; Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), pp. 412–16, 566–68; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 95–6, 98–99, 159–160; Leon Morris *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 105–6, 113–14, 230–4; Stephen Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John* (Dallas: Word, 1984), CD disc commentary 1 Jn. 4:9; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 10–14, 55. On rare occasions an individual suggests that the quotes of Psalm 2:7 in the N.T. can be taken in support of eternal generation. Psalm 2:7 "Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee" fits into the context of the day in which the Davidic king is installed as king in Jerusalem (Ps. 2:6). In Hebrews 1:5 this statement is already said to the Son and connected with the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:14 also quoted in Heb. 1:5). In Heb. 5:5 the *today* is identified with the earthly life of Jesus (Who was perfect and did not need a sacrifice [Heb. 5:1–3] and at Gethsemane cried out in effective prayer [Heb. 5:7–8]) in contrast with Psalm 110:4 quoted in Hebrews 5:6 perpetuity of Jesus as a Melchizedekian priest, once He began it in His humanity. Such a priesthood is not eternal because Jesus had to become incarnated before it could begin. In Acts 13:33 Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch quote Psalm 2:7 connected with the resurrection of Jesus. Similar affirmations of the beloved Sonship of Jesus are also said in His baptism and transfiguration but none develop eternal generation (Mt. 3:17; 17:5; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22). When D. A. Carson was asked about these uses of Psalm 2:7 at the Southeast ETS, 2003 meeting, he denied that they had anything to do with eternal generation and denied the concept traditionally attached to *μονογενῆς* as well. Then he responded with a text in John 6 that he claimed developed aseity, but I think that his text better teaches an economic ministry of sustenance. For example, in John 6:32–33 Jesus (the bread of God) is true bread given by the Father coming out of heaven revelationally for sustenance and thereby life to the world, in a time like manna had been given out in the wilderness (Jn. 6:31). Notice that this is not aseity for it would only be appropriate after creation had occurred, for He came to give life to the world. Additionally, this comment by Jesus would only be appropriate after Jesus' incarnation, for in John 6:38 Jesus identifies that He had come down from heaven, sent by the Father to do His Father's will. Therefore, these do not teach aseity, and I agree with Carson that they do not teach eternal generation.

Likewise, the procession of the Spirit is best seen as a historical process that occurs after Jesus ascends, rather than an “eternal procession” as argued by the traditions of the church, as they appeal especially to John 14:25–26, 15:26 and 16:5. However, these Biblical texts indicate that this procession happens historically, when the Holy Spirit is economically sent to continue Jesus’ ministry. For example, John 14:17–18 indicates that the disciples with Jesus in the upper room have the Holy Spirit with them but there will be a change as Jesus leaves, for then the Holy Spirit will be in them. After Jesus leaves the Father will send (πέμψει) the Holy Spirit to the disciples to remind these disciples about the things Jesus said to them when He was in fact with them (Jn. 14:25–26). The Holy Spirit will come after Jesus leaves, sent (πέμψω) by Christ and going out (ἐκπορεύεται) from the Father (Jn. 15:26). However, the Son must leave first and return to the Father who sent the Son and thus the disciples will have an advantage as Christ leaves, for the Son will send (πέμψω) the Holy Spirit to them so that the Spirit might convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:5, 7–8). The same economic relationship of being sent that the Son had, the Holy Spirit will have, and thus the Holy Spirit is another comforter like Christ. In Acts 1:8 the Holy Spirit had not been received by the disciples yet in this manner, so that they awaited His empowerment in their future. Christ finally ascends in Acts 1:9 leaving His disciples. On the feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit fills the disciples and they have a dramatic empowerment to proclaim the gospel (Acts 2:2–4). God declares that in the last days He will pour forth (ἐκχεῖ) the Spirit on all mankind (Acts 2:17). Jesus Christ in His exaltation receives (λαβὼν) the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and so Christ pours forth (ἐξέχεεν) this Holy spirit phenomenon which the Jews present can see and hear (Acts

2:33). In the wake of this historical procession which happened at Pentecost, the father sends (ἐξαπέστειλεν) the Spirit into believers' hearts prompting them to intimate prayer by which we cry out, "Daddy, Father" (Gal. 4:6). This condition of the indwelling Spirit who prompts believers to intimate prayer happens for all who belong to Christ, are adopted as sons by the Father and are co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:9, 15, 17). Since the Biblical text emphasizes procession to be an economic historical coming of the Spirit at Pentecost with continued economic affect in believers, it is best to reject the ancient traditions that the Spirit is from an eternal procession. Likewise, it is best to see that this procession is economically from the Father and the Son by comparing that the same Greek words describe the Father's sending of the Spirit (πέμψει, ἐκχέω) also describe the Son's sending of the Spirit (πέμψω, ἐξέχεεν). The unanimous voice of scholarly commentators<sup>97</sup> at this point agree further confirming the exegetical view that the sending of the Spirit is an economic historical coming to perform certain ministries beginning at Pentecost. At this point, it looks like Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism have developed a theological methodology that can render them insensitive to what scholarship claims the Biblical text says. How many others will join them?

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<sup>97</sup>E.g., G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Waco: Word Publishers, 1987), pp. 261, 286–7; Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John xiii-xxi*, vol. 29 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 650–1, 699–700; Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody: Henderickson Publishers, 2003), vol. 2, pp. 951–973, 1022–27, 1035–43; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 484, 496; Leon Moris *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 656–7, 683–4; B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 208–9, 224–225.

## Critical Methodology

By critical methodology, I mean primarily the philosophical and theological criticism, though there is also textual criticism happening as well.<sup>98</sup> This critical methodology approach developed here tends to diminish tradition in the normal sense, as too reactionarily conservative, and replaces tradition with some critical intellectual tool like reason.<sup>99</sup> However, there is a kind of tradition even in this approach much like the heritage of individual scholarly approaches that extend the research program of those who have gone before. As David Brown says it, “Traditions of reading continue to maintain their imaginative power not by staying the same but by being open to the transforming power of influences beyond themselves.”<sup>100</sup> So tradition can be seen as “the imaginative reappropriation of the past, and not its slavish copying.”<sup>101</sup> In the previous chapter, Lakatos’ method of research programs explained this process. Such a theological criticism stance emerged with the rise of modern philosophy, which was developed in the previous chapter, so let me here merely summarize a few features sufficient for our purposes.

Modern philosophy begins with Descartes, in 1641 A.D., analyzing the role of tradition as able to be brought within the sphere of that which can be doubted.<sup>102</sup> He was seeking a philosophical and theological method that had the certainty of his study in

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<sup>98</sup> Textually, Graph then Welhausen, and then their offspring began to try to recover the historical stages of the biblical text with what they considered certainty, while the text piecemeals in their hands. This form is less helpful for our purposes here since many in literary criticism since the mid 1990’s have returned to evaluating text as a whole. This more recent move sets up the strength of Biblical theology all that much more.

<sup>99</sup> E.g., David Brown, *Tradition & Imagination: Revelation & Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 61.

<sup>100</sup> David Brown, *Tradition & Imagination*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>101</sup> David Brown, *Tradition & Imagination*, p. 65.

<sup>102</sup> Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, especially meditation one, *Great Books of the Western World* vol. 31 *Descartes, Spinoza*, (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 75–77.

geometry and algebra. His undeniable starting point is that in his doubting his own existence he realized that he was thinking, and such thought confirmed to him that he was a thinking being. Most philosophers grant this insight but most philosophers today do not think that this is very significant because few people won't already grant that they exist. Likewise, most philosophers think that Descartes is overconfident about the extent of a world view that can be provided by rationalistic means.

Locke jumpstarted British empiricism in 1690 A.D. with a confidence in experience as the means by which any man can plumb the depths of God's creation.<sup>103</sup> Locke challenged traditions and tried to remove some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge.<sup>104</sup> He was looking for determinate ideas that can be seen and perceived.<sup>105</sup> He insisted that propositions which are contrary to reason cannot have been revealed by God.<sup>106</sup> However, Locke's empirical confidence is muted in 1748 A.D. by David Hume's skepticism within Empiricism.<sup>107</sup> His criticism analyzed the senses and showed that in many ways they could be doubted. Thus Hume becomes profoundly skeptical not grounded by empirical sense as he concludes in the last lines of his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* he says:

If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any experimental quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in *Great Books of the Western World* vol. 35, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 85–402.

<sup>104</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, epistle to the reader, p. 89.

<sup>105</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, epistle to the reader, pp. 91–92.

<sup>106</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, bk. 4, ch. 20, sect. 11, p. 392; he is especially addressing Catholic dogma like transubstantiation.

<sup>107</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, in *Great Books of the Western World* vol. 35, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 451–509.

<sup>108</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sect. 12, part 3, p. 509.

Kant's Critical philosophy extended Hume's skepticism.<sup>109</sup> Kant restricted knowledge to the phenomena and excluded it from the noumena, because the transcendental categories of the mind inhibited all individuals so that they can't know things in themselves. However, Kant finds that the tools of rationalism and empiricism can be employed together, though with muted confidence about things beyond oneself. When Kant's *The Critique of Judgment* explores an aesthetic and purpose of nature, he finds what for him is a bridge between science and concepts like morality, freedom and faith.<sup>110</sup> While not actually using the concept of tradition, it looks to this reader that the concepts of Kant's worldview are in fact traditional concepts available in his day.<sup>111</sup> Such a world view tradition informs the evaluation of universal assent and judgments of taste. In his analytic of the sublime, he sets up an aesthetic strategy that prepares for existentialism. Tapping this root, Clayton Crockett develops *A Theology of the Sublime* that emerges as a connection is made between the Kantian sublime of the third critique and the transcendental imagination of the first critique.<sup>112</sup> Crockett employs the critical resources of Kant and the existentialists who work in Kant's wake. For example, drawing upon Vattimo and Heidegger, Crockett highlights the developmental nature of theological tradition.

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<sup>109</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 42, *Kant* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 1–252.

<sup>110</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 42, *Kant* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 461–613

<sup>111</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 42, *Kant* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 459–613, and especially part one, book two, section 26, pp. 500–501 where the concept of the sublime *Weltanschauung* (or worldview) first appeared in 1790. Cf. Werner Betz, "Zur Geschichte des Wortes 'Weltanschauung,'" In *Kursbuch der Weltanschauungen*, Schriften der Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung (Frankfort: Verlag Ullstein, 1980), pp. 18–28 but especially p.18; cf. David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. xix, 58, and 66. On page 58 an extended footnote #14 develops the Kantian origins of worldview.

<sup>112</sup> Clayton Crockett, *A Theology of the Sublime* (London: Routledge, 2001).

A theological investigation does not simply deal with the traditional objects or concepts of theology as they have been already determined and handed down, but in rethinking theological insights one must deal with the processes of understanding through experience which generate the theological conceptions in the first place. In this way, a theological thinking generates theology itself.<sup>113</sup>

A century before Gerald Smith of the University of Chicago said that what matters in theology is solely whether a belief is practically effective and rationally credible at the present time, not “whether the solutions demanded by present problems do or do not correspond with the doctrine of some former age.”<sup>114</sup>

Within this muted perspective, and with the passion of pietism, Friedrich Schleiermacher proposes that religion was a “sense and taste for the infinite.”<sup>115</sup> Life without this taste is incomplete. Within this taste for the infinite, the essence of religious experience is “a feeling of absolute dependence.”<sup>116</sup> With such an internally warranted view for oneself, there is a balancing role provided by the community that one is associated with so that the community feels this dependence together.

Paul Tillich transports this dependence into the existential “ultimate concern.”<sup>117</sup> Much of the tradition is criticized and rejected by him as not being propositions that deal with the object worthy of ultimate concern. This orientation reflects his commitment to be expanding the envelope for theological studies. Or as he described it, being the theologian on the boundaries of the discipline. However, theology positions itself within the contents of the Christian faith and correlates it to our existential situation. Thus it is not ignorant of tradition. However, when tradition becomes dogmatics for him, it is “the

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<sup>113</sup> Crockett, *A Theology of the Sublime*, p. 20.

<sup>114</sup> Gerald Birney Smith, “The Task and Method of Systematic Theology,” in *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), p. 226.

<sup>115</sup> F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers* (originally 1799).

<sup>116</sup> F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999 originally 1821), especially sections 3 and 4.

<sup>117</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 11–18.

doctrinal tradition for our present situation.”<sup>118</sup> In fact, the way theology warrants itself as *the* theology is to position itself in the tension between the absolutely concrete and the absolutely universal. He criticizes priestly and prophetic theologies (like the Reformers, Biblical theologians and evangelicals) as being too concrete. Furthermore, he criticizes mystical and metaphysical theologies (like Orthodoxy, Roman Catholic, and evangelicals) as being too universal, because they lack concreteness. So for him the existentially paradoxical tension in theology, yet still held to by a group is the goal of that which is universally concrete and absolutely universal. Examples of this kind of tension force us into the trinity issues, like “divine Logos become flesh,” or “being in Christ.”

Tracy extends this model of correlation into a new generation of existential hermeneutical thought. So, tradition becomes the pre-understandings for textual meaning as it is personally appropriated by the interpreter as he reads the text.<sup>119</sup> For Tracy, “the community of theologians either develops or corrects the tradition for the sake of the tradition and in terms of the tradition’s own call to constant self-reformation.”<sup>120</sup>

Pannenberg positions himself within Hegel’s transcendental idealism and Trinity informed triadic framework.<sup>121</sup> For Hegel, the clarity of the overarching idea, virtually the mind of God, serves as a lens that puts each thing or belief in their place in the progressively revealing tension and resolution of the mind of God. For Pannenberg, the task of theology following Hegel is to develop “a series of stages in which at any given

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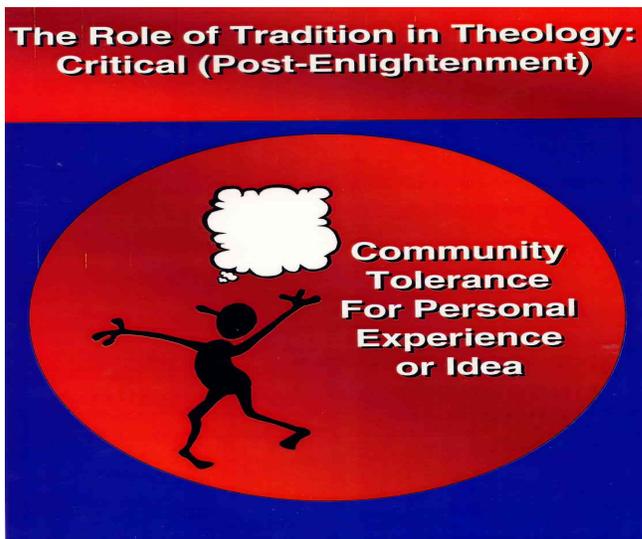
<sup>118</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–63), vol. 1, p. 32; cf. Carl Braaten, “The Role of Dogma in Church and Theology” in *The Task of Theology Today*, edited by Victor Pfitzner and Hilary Regan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 23–54.

<sup>119</sup> David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), p. 243.

<sup>120</sup> David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, p. 237.

<sup>121</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baile (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays Volume 2* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 21–27.

point, the higher stage is constitutive of the preceding insofar as it synthesizes into a unity the contradictions of the preceding one, and thus contains the provisional whole of the entire dialectical path that had been traversed up to that point.”<sup>122</sup> At this point he reflects Hegel in a noncontradictory synthesis beyond contradictions and thus on that basis especially pictures the absolute God.<sup>123</sup> From this framework he argues that, “the unity of the tradition can exist despite different dogmatic formulations and in spite of many criticisms of the dogmatic formulations of past times. The unity of the tradition is grounded in the common relation of different theologians of different ages to the norm of the one and the same Christ-event.”<sup>124</sup>



#### Examined in Trinity Development

The critical perspective contains a wide array of views concerning the Trinity. On the one hand there is Kant who denies the Trinity outright, with his statement that there is “absolutely nothing worthwhile for practical life that can be made out of the doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, when one believes that one has understood it adequately, but

<sup>122</sup> Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, vol. 2, p. 21.

<sup>123</sup> Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, vol. 2, pp. 21–22.

<sup>124</sup> Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, vol. 1, p. 208.

even less when one perceives that it exceeds all our concepts.”<sup>125</sup> On the radical opposite side Hegel lets the Trinity dominate his whole metaphysics and epistemology through his triadic structure in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. There are a range of other options between these.

Few among critical theological diversity explain the idea of generation and procession except as a historical development. Part of this lack of development is as we pointed out above, these concepts emerge from archaic thought forms such as Stoicism and Platonism. In fact, the Platonic press to eternalize both the procession and generation is to try to preserve their truth value, since in Platonism everything that is really true is eternal as in the realm of the forms. However, the critical orientation deviates from and critiques these philosophical roots as earlier perspectives to grow beyond. For example, Schleiermacher argues that ontological distinction of eternal generation and procession destroy the equality of the persons in the Godhead.<sup>126</sup> Thus for Schleiermacher, theology as a discipline must grow beyond such archaic thought forms. So there is little reason to dip back into these archaic wells here, except to criticize them.

This criticism can be seen as an extension of John Langshaw Austin’s work which investigates the meaning of words.<sup>127</sup> This criticism here includes that these concepts are themselves contradictory and thus not worthy to be believed.<sup>128</sup> For example, in the patristic context eternal means “outside of time, without change, and perpetual” and γενναω means “birth as a historical instance,” so that what would “eternal generation”

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<sup>125</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, A 50, 57, translated and quoted by Jürgen Moltmann, “The Trinitarian History of God,” *Theology* 78(1975): 633.

<sup>126</sup> E.g., F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, pp. 738–751.

<sup>127</sup> John Langshaw Austin, *How to do things With Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962) and *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

<sup>128</sup> Doug Kennard, *The Classical Christian God* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), pp. 82–85.

combining these ideas mean? That is, what would a “perpetual beyond history birth as a historical instance” mean, but a contradiction? Likewise, sending or procession happens historically in time, as we developed under Biblical theology above, so what would “eternal procession” mean? That is, what would a “perpetual beyond history sending as a historical instance” mean, but a contradiction? As contradiction, they are not worthy to be believed.

Pannenberg is one critical theologian who still uses these concepts of eternal generation and procession but clarifies that the passages used to teach the view in fact teach an economic generation and procession akin to how I developed them under Biblical theology.<sup>129</sup> For Pannenberg, a form of procession is seen as an eternal description of relationship in the Trinity (following Augustinian tradition and the Western Church) while the generation of the Son and the sending of the Spirit happen in time for the economy of salvation (following the Biblical text).<sup>130</sup> This form of synthesis is what one might expect from a Hegelian, however I believe this approach can be critiqued in the spirit of critical methodology. First, the presentation of eternal generation of the Son and eternal procession of the Spirit is maintained by Pannenberg exclusively because the tradition presents them that way. No further evidence is marshaled on their behalf, and all the other evidence (especially the Biblical evidence) normally marshaled on their behalf is reapplied to the economic sendings, like the Biblical theologians did. This shows that while critical methodology protests against tradition, often tradition is smuggled back in to prop up basic beliefs. Secondly, the philosophical contradiction in “eternal generation” itself and “eternal procession” itself renders these concepts in and of

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<sup>129</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), vol. 1, p. 305.

<sup>130</sup> Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, pp. 305, 316–319.

themselves not worthy to be believed. This critical philosopher's opinion is that it is not appropriate to believe such contradictories for only traditional reasons; contradictory traditions are to be jettisoned. Furthermore, as I developed in the previous chapter, the Hegelian strategy's third triad does not arrive at transcendental truth that stands above the contradiction within a thesis or antithesis. Additionally, there is no reason to attempt to transcend the antithesis (of economical sendings) in this case, since all the Biblical evidence lies with this view.

### Mainstream Evangelicalism with Pietism

Mark Noll argues that one of the distinctives of American theology is that it is populist innovation.<sup>131</sup> In fact, the American rejection of the value of class and nobility, disconnected their practice of religion from the preference of kings to a capitalistic marketing based arena in which each entrepreneur within religion would demonstrate his worth by the extent of a following that he could attract around him. This approach protected religion from its demise as occurred in Europe when the kings were thrown out. That is, in America religion was immersed into an arena of pragmatism, in which unpopularity became among the gravest of sins. Alister McGrath and David Wells conclude that American evangelicalism is strongly pragmatic.<sup>132</sup> That is, that freedom and religion have been closely linked in America and that populism accepting or rejecting

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<sup>131</sup> Mark Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); cf. Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don't Think and What to do About it* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), pp. 44–48. E.g., Jeff Sharlet "Soldiers of Christ, I. Inside America's Most Powerful Megachurch," *Harper's Magazine* 310:1860(May, 2005): 48.

<sup>132</sup> Alister McGrath, "Evangelical Theological Method: The State of the Art" in *Evangelical Futures*, edited by John Stackhouse (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), p. 16; David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth, or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

the novel has told whether the theological innovation amounted to much on the American scene.

A particular set of American conditions ... have opened the door to many opportunities for popular theological innovation. Without a national state church, with few widely revered theological traditions, with no centralized scheme of national education, with all of the denominations compelled to enter into vigorous popular competition for adherents, with innovations in communications implemented by ordinary people, and with significant amounts of wealth widely distributed and available for establishing colleges, publishing houses, newspapers, and other means of disseminating ideas, the United States has been a very fertile medium for popular theologies.<sup>133</sup>

This independent populism has long characterized the American religious scene as evidenced by the freedom that de Toqueville noticed over a century and a half ago.

Anglo-American civilization ... is the result ... of two distinct elements which in other places have been in frequent disagreement, but which the Americans have succeeded in incorporating to some extent one with the other and combining admirably. I allude to the *spirit of religion* and the *spirit of liberty* ... On my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things. In France, I had always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and they reigned in common over the same country.<sup>134</sup>

Such American evangelical populism often resists theological depth.<sup>135</sup> However, American evangelicalism tends “to read the Bible as Scripture...in a particular interpretative tradition.”<sup>136</sup> For example, Noll explores dispensationalism as a theological movement driven by the popular study and preaching of the English Bible.<sup>137</sup> The dispensational response among the Plymouth Brethren “was to abandon formally

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<sup>133</sup> Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, p. 195.

<sup>134</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Thomas Bender (New York: Modern Library, 1981), p. 185.

<sup>135</sup> Alister McGrath, “Engaging the Great Tradition,” in *Evangelical Futures*, edited by John Stackhouse (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), p. 140.

<sup>136</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 168.

<sup>137</sup> Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, pp. 66–67, 196–7.

organized churches and to place their hope in a dispersed invisible church made up of God's faithful remnant."<sup>138</sup> Noll's conclusion is that dispensationalism epitomized this populist thrust.

Dispensational theology never caught on at America's elite universities or seminaries, but it was a huge popular success that drove the activities of conference speakers, lay theological institutes, prophecy conferences, popular magazines, and the publication of thousands of books. Its confidence in both the literal meaning of Scripture and in the ability of lay people to understand the Bible fitted it perfectly to traditional patterns of American Protestant life.<sup>139</sup>

However, after a century of dispensational teaching, there is a deeply lain tradition in this inventive populism as well. The tradition can be clearly seen in the theological statements of dispensational institutions and in the writings of their faculties. This is even more apparent as dispensationalism was challenged by the progressive dispensational movement.

Included among this evangelical populism were those who prided themselves in keeping the faith of a tradition as well, like the offspring of the Reformers who embraced the climax of the reformation confessions. Alister McGrath points out that this is a communal continuity with the past.

The past generated a tradition to which the present is heir. That tradition involves modes of discourse, ways of conceiving the world, so forth, which it impressed upon the world, and which was perpetuated in a definite historical form, being mediated through both institutions and individuals.<sup>140</sup>

McGrath further points out that "evangelicals have denominational loyalties, which often exercise a subtle influence over the assumptions and agendas that are brought to the theological tasks."<sup>141</sup> Stanley Grenz sees that Christian theology is to "delineate the

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<sup>138</sup> Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, p. 197.

<sup>139</sup> Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, p. 197.

<sup>140</sup> Alister McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 188.

<sup>141</sup> Alister McGrath, "Evangelical Theological Method," p. 27; also *The Genesis of Doctrine*, pp. 178, 183.

community's interpretive framework" because "all Christian theology is communitarian."<sup>142</sup> He goes on to point out, "as a result, our respective communities (or traditions) play an indispensable role in shaping our conceptions of rationality, as well as the religious beliefs we deem basic and thus use to test new claims."<sup>143</sup> Their summaries include the dispensationalist communities as well as those who are more intentional about a conventional loyalty, as in a reformed perspective loyal to *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, or Wesleyan with its Quadrilateral (which includes tradition) or other creed of the faith.

Many of these evangelical approaches position themselves within pietism, with its: personal relationship with Christ, passion for Bible and ministry, leading of Spirit and illumination of the Spirit. The leading of the Spirit and illumination of the Spirit bleed into each other. Taken together they are similar to the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Spirit enablement of tradition through apostolic succession and the Pope. However, in evangelicalism the illumination of the Spirit is shifted from a divine support of the tradition to usually a work in the individual interpreter to aid him in discerning the message of the Biblical passage.<sup>144</sup> The earliest expressions of this illumination of the Spirit emerged among Lutheran pietism when Phillip Jakob Spener replaced the concept of verbal inspiration of the Scriptures with a personal inspiration or illumination of the believing interpreter, fostering a major controversy with orthodox Lutheranism.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Stanley Grenz, "Articulating the Christian Belief Mosaic: Theological Method after the Demise of Foundationalism," in *Evangelical Futures*, edited by John Stackhouse (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), pp. 123, 130.

<sup>143</sup> Grenz, "Articulating the Christian Mosaic," in *Evangelical Futures*, p. 131.

<sup>144</sup> An example of this is in *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics* (1978), "Articles of Affirmation and Denial," Article 5, in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, & the Bible*. edited by Earl Radmacher and Robert Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), p. 882.

<sup>145</sup> Philipp Jakob Spener, *Consilia Et Judicia Theologia* (Frankfurt a.M., 1709), vol. 3, p. 700; Cf. K. James Stein, "Phillip Jakob Spener (1635–1705)" and Markus Matthias, "August Hermann Franke (1663–1727)"

Spener agreed with the reformers that the text was clear but viewed humans as so impaired by sin so that only “reborn” preachers with the enlightening of the Spirit (like the resurrected Christ provided on the Emmaus road) could rightfully understand the Biblical text. This ushered in one of the most violent controversies which orthodox reformation thought had against pietism. In 1685 A.D. the exhaustive collection of Lutheran theology in *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* by the Johann Quenstedt (nicknamed “the bookkeeper” for his exhaustive cataloging of views) reframed the Spirit’s illuminational aid as one of regenerative interpretation and not inspiration.<sup>146</sup> In 1707 A.D. David Hollanz embraced this view that the Holy Spirit is promised to every Christian so that they might understand the Biblical text better.<sup>147</sup> Around 1701 A.D., August Herman Franke shifted the illumination of the Spirit as *sensus mysticus* when reading the Biblical text, extending John Hus’ Spirit regeneration idea to an affective

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in *The Pietist Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth Centuries*. edited by Carter Lindberg (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 88 and 105–6; Johannes Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1970), pp. 92–96; Emmanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuen Evangelische Theologie in Zusammenhang mit den allgemein Bewegung des Europäischen Denkens* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1951), vol. 2, p. 114; Volker Jung, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift. Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung bei Abraham Calov* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1999), pp. 100–1.

<sup>146</sup> Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* (Wittenberg: Johanne Ludolph Quenstedt, 1685). The relevant portion (chapters 1–3) of this is available in English as: *The Nature and Character of Theology: An Introduction to the Thought of J. A. Quenstedt from THEOLOGIA DIDACTICO-POLEMICA SIVE SYSTEMA THEOLOGICUM*. abridged, edited, and translated by Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986), ch. I “Of Theology in General”: question I “Is Theology Given?” paragraph XI, p. 36; ph. XIV, p. 39; ph. XXXI-Observe (1), p. 54; ph. XXXV, p. 57; Section II “Polemic”-“Sources of Rebutals or Dialysis of Objections”: q. I “Is Theology Given?”, pp. 64–5; q. II “Is Revealed Theology Necessary in the Church?”, pp. 71, 72–3; q. III “Is Theology a God-Given Practical Aptitude?”, exposition III & IV, pp. 73–4; rebuttal I, p. 80; ch. III “Of the Sources of Theology”, porism IV, pp. 199–200. Stanley Grenz, in *Beyond Foundationalism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 99 claims that this illumination view originated earlier by at least the time of John Hus and cites George Tavard in *Holy Writ or Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), pp. 47–66 which discusses John Hus’ view of the soteriological transformation in which the Holy Spirit enables the new believer to be applicationally responsive to the Word of God. From my reading of the Hus material, I agree with Tavard, contrary to Grenz; Hus does not teach this view of the illumination through the Holy Spirit aid to cognitively understand the Bible. I have not found the view any earlier than Spener’s, Quenstedt’s and Hollanz’s pietistic Lutheran systematic theologies.

<sup>147</sup> David Hollanz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum* was published in 1707 and 1725 but is available as *Acromaticum Universam Theologiam Thetico-Polemicam Complectens* (Lipsiae: B.C. Breitkopfii, 1763).

product brought about by the Spirit when studying the Bible.<sup>148</sup> That is, only the person moved by the Spirit can acquire “living” knowledge of the Biblical text that will bring about spiritual affection. Evangelicalism has largely owned Spener and Hollanz’s cognitive illumination view, with others in evangelicalism join Franke’s Spirit transformational illumination view. For example, the 1982 evangelical Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics includes as the fifth article: “WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives. WE DENY that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.”<sup>149</sup> This statement indicates in its denial a cognitive illuminational element while in its affirmation the transformational illumination is highlighted. This statement reflects the emphasis in evangelicalism that the Holy Spirit aids the individual’s use of hermeneutics.

However, some in evangelicalism are advocating a communal illumination. A contemporary advocate of this communal illumination view is Donald Bloesch. He identifies that the Bible’s revelatory status “does not reside in its wording as such but in the Spirit of God, who fills the words with meaning and power.”<sup>150</sup> This view provides a post textual subjective meaning. Kevin Vanhoozer also wishes to extend this individual illumination into becoming a community illumination of Spirit, “Only a prayerful reading that invokes the Spirit can perceive the true meaning in what is otherwise a dead letter. Such Spirit-led exegesis ‘restores the interpretive activity of the spiritual community as

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<sup>148</sup> August Hermann Franke introduced his view in 1701, publishing the idea in 1709 and then more fully in 1717 as *Praelectiones Hermeneuticae*, p. 57; cf. Markus Matthias, “August Hermann Franke (1663–1727)” in *The Pietist Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth Centuries*. edited by Carter Lindberg (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 106–7.

<sup>149</sup> The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics as contained in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*. edited by Earl Radmacher and Robert Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), p. 891.

<sup>150</sup> Donald Bloesch, *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration & Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), p. 27.

the connecting link between text and reader.’”<sup>151</sup> Community textual decisions are essentially saying that the Holy Spirit assures the community that they will interpret correctly as they frame up their tradition. In conservative circles this illumination is often supported through textual appeals to John 14:26; 16:12–15; 1 Cor. 2:6–16; and 1 John 2:27. I argue along with the scholarly commentators that these texts do not teach such an illumination view.<sup>152</sup> This argument is briefly contained in the chapters on “Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic” and “Biblical Authority.”



So Evangelicalism often has a confidence that by the aid from the Holy Spirit the community can obtain the correct interpretation of the Biblical text and thereby embrace a corporate agreement to delineate their traditions. This approach functions in church, school and academic societies. However, as evident by the argument in subsequent chapters, I wonder if this basic belief is so well grounded. I think that in fact it is not and if the illumination of the Spirit is not working as they suppose then evangelicalism

<sup>151</sup> Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), p. 411.

<sup>152</sup> Douglas Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique,” *JETS* 49/4(Dec. 2006): 767–806; cf. later chapters: “Thiselton-Ricoeur Hermeneutic” and “Biblical Authority in the Contemporary Hermeneutical Scene” earlier presented at the Wheaton Theology Conference, 2001, The Evangelical Theological Society, 2002, and the American Academy of Religion, 2003, pp. 21–25. Cf. Douglas Kennard, *The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization*, pp. 139–42.

reduces to a pragmatic populism<sup>153</sup> that occasionally interprets the Biblical text in very traditional ways, which Biblical scholarship does not support.

In evangelicalism, the leading of the Spirit is often seen as a divine personal guidance in the decision making process. This view may not be held by a majority in evangelicalism in the wake of the critique by Gary Friesen, *Decision Making & the Will of God*,<sup>154</sup> but it is still widely held. While this view is usually developed as an individual aid, the individuals that make up a group sometimes appeal to it to support their traditions as a softer version<sup>155</sup> of the Orthodox and Catholic claimed Spirit aid. For example, a church may claim that God is “leading” them into a building program.

How does the Bible use the concept of divine leading? The clear N.T. texts on the leading of the Spirit fit into two basic categories. First, the Spirit lead Jesus into temptation (Mt. 4:1; Mk. 1:12; Lk. 4:1), which is why Jesus has his disciples pray to the Father, “Do not lead us into temptation” (Mt. 6:13; Lk. 11:4). This form of Spirit leading is of little encouragement for the evangelical, since it brought Jesus to temptation rather than gave him success in ministry. The other leading of the Spirit in the N.T. is that developed by Paul as a metaphor for the Spirit’s cultivating virtues within the believer like righteousness, the fruit of the Spirit, a sense of belonging in God’s family, and intimacy in prayer (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18). Evangelicalism appreciates this ministry of the Spirit but does not let the Biblical terminology of “leading” be restricted to the

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<sup>153</sup> Alister McGrath, “Evangelical Theological Method: The State of the Art” in *Evangelical Futures*, edited by John Stackhouse, p. 16; David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth, or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?*; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 185; cf. Os Guinness (*Fit Bodies, Fat Minds*, pp. 34–39, 44–48, 55–59) argues that pietism, populism and pragmatism in evangelicalism cultivate an anti-intellectual lack of engagement.

<sup>154</sup> Gary Friesen, *Decision Making & the Will of God: A Biblical Alternative to the Traditional View* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980). Critique of the Spirit leading view explained in pp. 23–150, and the way of wisdom alternative explained in pp. 151–282.

<sup>155</sup> I.e. potentially errant version.

Biblical uses of the term. That is, evangelicalism has coined the term to mean something else, namely personal guidance. Here, Gary Friesen has ably analyzed the evangelical rationale and concluded that the Biblical texts appealed to do not support the view of personal guidance. Instead, he sees that God has promised to mature us so that we can cultivate the wisdom which is available so that we could make wise decisions.

If Friesen is right about decision making, and Biblical theology excludes “Spirit leading” from normal guidance, and the scholarly Biblical commentators are right about illumination of the Spirit, *then our traditions and statements of faith are in fact community conventions, without any claim to the Spirit as buoying them up.* For example, Bryan College presents its “Statement of Belief” as the previously adopted 1919 “Philadelphia Convention of the World’s Christian Fundamental Association,” an interdenominational Protestant evangelical organization of that period. In this case a convention formulated and adopted what they believed, and we at Bryan College affirm yearly that we join in the same belief. Such a belief statement is a meaningful conventionally formulated tradition to govern all trustees, administrators, and faculty at Bryan College. If we wish to minister in this fine place, then we need to believe what this statement says. Beyond these traditional restrictions at Bryan College, there is freedom within “the normal divergence which is characteristic of the larger American evangelical community.”<sup>156</sup>

With 1976 becoming the year of the Evangelical, according to *Time* magazine, and the rise of evangelical power politics as a power block to be marshaled to get elected, evangelicalism has become a huge guerrilla in the jungle throwing its weight around politically. The populous pragmatic power politics is apparent in some schools and

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<sup>156</sup> *Bryan College Catalog 2002–2004*, p. 7.

academic societies as well. We have infused politics among evangelicalism. This may mean that the image of the “obnoxious American,” insensitive to others’ concerns may have merged with the “can do” evangelical possibly producing a “kick butt” Christianity. Some among us operate under a code like: If people are in his way, he helps them turn their cheeks to remove them.

In practice, I think that the varieties of evangelicalism also each have oral traditions salted with land mines that an individual faculty member may only know after the fact, when unfortunately it is too late to do anything and all that can be heard are the sounds leading to his removal. A faculty member may only know where the land mines are by which steps take colleagues out. This leaves a faculty member with an uncomfortable choice between options like: stagnating his research to that which is safe where the trusted people have stepped before (repeating the trusted party line), or expecting that if he follows the Biblical text where it leads him he may eventually be among the maimed in this evangelical roulette game. Often the oral tradition develops its rationale in reaction to a perceived excess, too late to save a colleague who stepped on the land mine. Unfortunately, evangelicalism often seems more concerned about excising the ‘aberrant’ than recovering a brother. So when the clear lines are drawn after the fact (clarifying the ambiguous) these lines are still binding, and thus the mine has been stepped on, and the faculty member is gone.

When these ideas are expressed in a corporate culture, Adrian Savage describes them as the elements of Golf culture, namely: trust, collegiality and patronage.<sup>157</sup> This

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<sup>157</sup> Adrian Savage, founder and president of PNA Inc., a consulting firm (<http://www.nettps.com>). I am aware that these issues of privilege and abuse are not limited to evangelical institutions. Unfortunately, they are common in academia. E.g., Scott Smallwood “Tenure Madness: How a Shoe-in at Brooklyn

golf culture is driven by receptivity from the institutional top levels. Which means that often these decisions are made by generalists who do not involve themselves in nuanced theology but have a finger on the pulse of their constituency. For a theologians success in a context as this, scholarship and warranting is largely considered useless unless the message is welcome at the top.<sup>158</sup> For example, an individual pursuing ideas he takes to be Biblical are collegially offered to our evangelical institutions and are critiqued on a continental divide of the conventions and inclinations of institutional leadership. Some ideas break one way for a variety of traditions, whereas in other traditions they break another direction. Depending upon where the idea lands in relation to a particular leader and conventional group's tradition, the result will be either: 1) the group will be predisposed to trust the person and be more congenial and benefit them through patronage, *or* 2) suspect the person, isolate the person and put them at risk. Community shunning (being cut out of privileges and responsibilities) is often used to try to motivate this compliance. However, when such shunning doesn't work and we conservatives can't defeat the offending view by reasons or good exegesis, it looks to me like we conservatives often disengage from these individuals, politically abusing them or defaming their reputation.

My concern here is that perceived "normal tradition" often excludes an honest appraisal of the Biblical text as it is. That is, embracing a Kuhnian *normalcy of tradition* rather than a Lakatos' *developmental tradition* reduces scholarly engagement with the Biblical text. In this issue it looks to me that evangelicalism, like any confessional

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College Almost Got the Boot," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 59, no. 37 (May 23, 2003): A10–A12.

<sup>158</sup> An example of this is evident in the review of Richard Helms book, *A Look Over My Shoulder* by Joseph Persico, "Company Man," in *New York Times Book Review*, Sunday, May 4, 2003, p. 9.

approach runs the risk of domesticating the Bible so that it is turned into a safe pussy cat which provides traditional comfort. We tame the Bible, cage it until it safely sits on our laps and purrs. We propagate this domesticated Bible in the minds of our students and congregations. Instead, the Bible is a wild lion reflecting the character of God. Thus it is not safe but it is good. The Bible will not sit still, for it will continue to prod us and call us to the difficult way of discipleship which is always getting beyond ourselves: to understand it, to apply it, to love others and work for a unified body of Christ and to forgive our abusers. It does seem that some evangelicals will stop at very little to defame, exclude and destroy other evangelicals. This abuse isn't right; I hunger and thirst for righteousness among evangelicals.

Darrell Bock also appeals for public square institutions, like our academic societies and publishing houses, within which dialog from a range of opinions can be explored.<sup>159</sup> In this he says, “We need solidly grounded theologian-philosopher-exegetes in evangelicalism. Making too great a dichotomy between these roles will not help the church.”<sup>160</sup> To engage and consider issues like Openness of God, a full dialog and exchange in this public forum needs to take place.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, the ground rules are explicit and minimal as tied to the doctrinal statement of the respective society. If the advocates of a position like Openness of God embrace the doctrinal position of the society then they should not be evicted by a majority of members present who happen to disagree with their position. Even though I disagree with their view sufficiently to have written a book against their view,<sup>162</sup> I recognize that there is a continuing advantage in

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<sup>159</sup> Darrell Bock, *Purpose-Directed Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), pp. 32, 39, 70.

<sup>160</sup> Bock, *Purpose-Directed Theology*, p. 33.

<sup>161</sup> Bock, *Purpose-Directed Theology*, p. 94.

<sup>162</sup> Douglas Kennard, *The Classical Christian God*.

having people present in the academic society, with whom I do not always agree, so that when our focus goes to other issues, we might be sensitized by the other.<sup>163</sup> It can help us from becoming isolationist and ignorantly postmodern.

### Examined in Trinity Development

Evangelicalism broadly embraces the Western church's commitment to eternal generation of the Son and the eternal procession of the Spirit as Biblical truths. The confessional expression of evangelicalism can be exemplified in the Reformed perspective of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter II, article 3 which reads, that "the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."<sup>164</sup> While this statement did not have Biblical texts cited the rationale is often the very same Biblical texts throughout much of the Western church. From the dispensational side of evangelicalism, Lewis Sperry Chafer claims,

Theologians generally have been emphatic in their insistence that the divine Sonship is from all eternity. Their belief in this matter is based upon clear Scripture evidence. However, if the texts do not support their view, as we developed under the Biblical theology section, this would make this view an unwarranted convention continued because of the resilience of the tradition. He is the *Only Begotten* of the Father from all eternity.<sup>165</sup>

Chafer goes on to cite Richard Watson with approval on the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son.<sup>166</sup> The Biblical texts to which Chafer appeals are the same ones previously developed under the Biblical theology section. Many other theologians could be added to these voices, though occasionally, as with Gordon Lewis

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. John Stackhouse, "Evangelical Theology Should be Evangelical" and Kevin Vanhoozer "The Voice of the Actor" in *Evangelical Futures*, edited by John Stackhouse (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), pp. 56–8, 80.

<sup>164</sup> *The Westminster Confession of Faith* 2.3; also *Belgic Confession of Faith* art. 11.

<sup>165</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), vol. 1, p. 314.

<sup>166</sup> Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, p. 400.

and Bruce Demarest, the Biblical case for eternal generation also is built off the metaphors of radiance, image, and word as well as the texts mentioned above.<sup>167</sup> For them the generation and procession is both in eternity and in the redemptive activity. However, aren't "radiance, image and word" revelation metaphors more appropriate for the economy (of revelation and redemption)? Thus I would disconnect these metaphors from supporting generation and procession in eternity.

If the Biblical specialists claim that the Biblical texts teach something other than what our evangelical theology maintains, isn't our theology merely keeping a traditional convention alive? Personally, I do not value tradition highly enough to merely parrot it because it has always been this way, and as we have seen, it hasn't always been this way. Likewise, I do not value tradition highly enough to parrot it because it is politically expedient to do so. Truth needs to be driven by other than tradition and power politics. In this, I show myself in my systematic theology method to be identified with Biblical theology methodology as a critical realist. In fact, my appreciation for Lakatos' method of science reflects my desire to grow traditions beyond themselves by progressively following the Biblical text and good reasoning wherever they will lead. If there is no Biblical text reason to maintain a tradition, and no other warranted epistemic reason to grant it, then this bit of theology should be jettisoned as an archaic and degenerative tradition. To not follow this practice leaves us open to being accused of maintaining a post-modern religious convention. For example, Richard Lints describes evangelicalism to be principled pluralism in very modest post-modern ways; each community owns its own belief system with tolerance to other communal perspectives and biases, provided

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<sup>167</sup> Bruce Demarest and Gordon Lewis, *Integrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 277–79.

they respect that the Bible is the Word of God.<sup>168</sup> Aren't a number of commitments in evangelicalism essentially post-modern?

### Post-Modern

As a term “post-modern” emerged in the 1890’s as a critique of modern architecture but expanded to describe a range of emerging existential views from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s voice through Ivan Karamazov<sup>169</sup> and Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy. This existential post-modernity saw that whatever we choose to authentically fit ourselves is permitted provided you have the will and the power to accomplish it. In 1926, Bernard Bell provided the earliest philosophical critique of this existential post-modernism. Bell argued that there were resources for truth in modern epistemology that warrant our truth claims without reducing things essentially to choice.<sup>170</sup> This trajectory is already developed somewhat under that of Tillich and Tracy, but there are a host of more radical expressions that pursue this further, to populate the post-modern zoo. I surveyed some of these options in the previous chapter’s section on existentialism. However, for our purposes here, this existential post-modern approach commodifies belief in a radically pluralist society. With awareness that social construct is one’s reality, there is a decline of the dominant tradition, as Peter Berger explains.

The religious tradition, which previously could be authoritatively imposed, now has to be *marketed*. It must be “sold” to a clientele that is no longer constrained to “buy.” The pluralist situation is, above all, a *market situation*. In it, the

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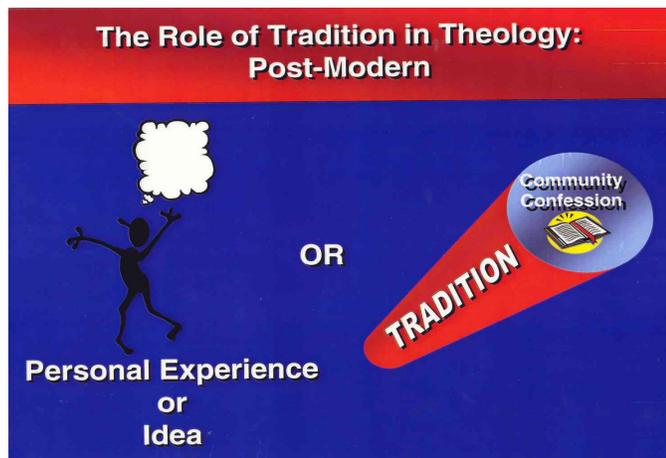
<sup>168</sup> Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), pp. 97–98.

<sup>169</sup> Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952).

<sup>170</sup> Bernard Iddings Bell, *Postmodernism and Other Essays* (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1926).

religious institutions become marketing agencies and the religious traditions become consumer commodities.<sup>171</sup>

From this perspective of the commodification of tradition, whatever would make a worldview attractive to an individual would be the sort of thing that would motivate worldview allegiance. This tends to place epistemic skills on the level of an existential aesthetic.



In 1947, Ludwig Wittgenstein pioneered a functional approach to language which is hailed as the watershed for the conventional form of post-modernism. Wittgenstein’s language games are conventional traditions. These language games “come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten.”<sup>172</sup> Each game has its form of life and its rules, which contextualize it so that it makes sense.

George Lindbeck’s “cultural-linguistic” model of religion proposes that for a community’s tradition becomes its own grammar.<sup>173</sup> Such tradition as grammar becomes

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<sup>171</sup> Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 138; cf. Reginald Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin, 1987); David Lyon, *Postmodernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press/Buckingham: Open University Press, 1994), ch. 4.

<sup>172</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1953, 1958), p. 11, #23.

<sup>173</sup> George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), pp. 32–41, 79–88.

the necessary condition for cognition and experience to be expressed, interpreted, and understood. Faithfulness to tradition is essential, though pioneering beyond what the tradition has expressed is permitted provided the new significance is communally embraced. In this way tradition is both the essential language game and yet it does not become bondage. So tradition is the linguistic medium that makes possible descriptions of realities and formation of belief; tradition is not a catalog of those beliefs.

Stanley Grenz develops that the frame of reference to his post-modern approach is the local church.<sup>174</sup> Such a community has a history which when it is retold, becomes the church's narrative tradition.<sup>175</sup> The constitutive narrative begins "with the primal events that called the community into being, and includes the crucial milestones that mark its subsequent trajectory...The act of reciting reconstitutes the community in the present as the contemporary embodiment of a communal tradition that spans the years."<sup>176</sup> However, the community tradition includes communal hopes for a future that motivates them toward what they consider would fully actualize the community.

The community history does not end in the past, but extends into the future. As a result, a community turns the gaze of its members toward the future, anticipating the continuation of, and even the further development of the community. Not only does the community sense that it is moving toward an ideal that lies yet before it, more importantly, it expectantly looks to the ideal or "eschatological" future, when the purpose and goals—the *telos*—of the community will be fully actualized. This expectation of a glorious future serves as an ongoing admonition to its members to embody the communal vision in the present.<sup>177</sup>

It is in the distinct community tradition that Grunlan and Mayers identify that there are "rites of intensification" which function to "bring the community together,

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<sup>174</sup> Stanley Grenz, "Ecclesiology" in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*. edited by Kevin Vanhoozer (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 252–268.

<sup>175</sup> Stanley Grenz, "Ecclesiology" in *Postmodern Theology*, p. 255.

<sup>176</sup> Stanley Grenz, "Ecclesiology" in *Postmodern Theology*, p. 255.

<sup>177</sup> Stanley Grenz, "Ecclesiology" in *Postmodern Theology*, p. 256.

increase group solidarity, and reinforce commitment to the beliefs of the group.”<sup>178</sup> So each community portrays its own distinct form of post-modernism.

John Milbank calls the Christian community back to a radical orthodoxy.<sup>179</sup> This radical orthodoxy is a return to tradition with a new twist on the kind and level of questions it asks. This radical orthodoxy is possible by reframing superficial secularism by Christian language games.<sup>180</sup> Radical orthodoxy resituates these areas of secular dominance through a Christian perspective, in phenomenal terms of Trinity, Christology, the Church and the Eucharist.<sup>181</sup> The repeatable tradition is that of our corporate phenomenal experiences. In this, there is no warrant for the unique things thought except the communal agreement of this group and any who would existentially choose to join them.

Kevin Vanhoozer reframes theology in this post-modern arena as community tradition theo-drama, prompted by the Spirit.<sup>182</sup> Church community tradition (through which its participants interpret the Bible) establishes the parameters of theo-drama. Vanhoozer appreciates George Lindbeck’s sentiment “that the doctrinally significant aspect of religion resides not in propositional truths or in religious experiences ‘but in the story it tells *and in the grammar that informs the way the story is told and used.*”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Stephen Grunlan and Marvin Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), p. 222.

<sup>179</sup> The critical role of removing the excess is especially seen in John Milbank, *Theology & Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). While the positive project of rebuilding is especially evident in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, edited by John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward (London: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>180</sup> John Milbank, Graham Ward and Catherine Pickstock, “Introduction” and Conor Cunningham “LANGUAGE: Wittgenstein after Theology” in *Radical Orthodoxy*, pp. 6–7, 71–87.

<sup>181</sup> Cunningham, “LANGUAGE: Wittgenstein after Theology” in *Radical Orthodoxy*, p. 85.

<sup>182</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

<sup>183</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer (*The Drama of Doctrine*, p. 172) quotes and adds the italics to *The Drama of Doctrine*, p. George Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), p. 80.

For Vanhoozer this tradition has more focus on life patterns than propositional doctrine; “*What theology now describes is not the ‘final form’ of the text but the ‘form of life’ in which the biblical language games function as Scripture.*”<sup>184</sup> In this, tradition’s role in theology frees its participants to improvise within it. Vanhoozer calls for “creative fidelity” or “ruled spontaneity”; “*The directions drawn by Scripture’s normative specification of the theo-drama enable the church to improvise, as it were, with a script.*”<sup>185</sup> Within the church’s community tradition, theology works out and converses with others to enable all to enter into a more intimate and growing relationship in Christ.

In the previous chapter Robert Webber developed millennial Younger Evangelical leadership as emerging with a more post-modern congregational approach, so I won’t repeat myself here. Is postmodernism the future traditional approach of evangelicalism?

### Examined in Trinity Development

Procession and generation are largely irrelevant fossils for the post-moderns, for in this neo-Barthian realm, existential relevance and phenomenal language games dominate. David Cunningham summarizes the post-modern approach to trinity to emphasize: 1) relationality, 2) difference, and 3) rhetoric.<sup>186</sup> In rejecting a modern penchant for division and isolation, he proposes that the post-modern is concerned for relation. “To speak of ‘Father’ or ‘Son’ is not to speak of an individual who is potentially isolated from other individuals; rather, the two terms specify *relations* that depend

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<sup>184</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, p. 172, italics his.

<sup>185</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, p. 129, italics his.

<sup>186</sup> David Cunningham, “The Trinity” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, pp. 186–195.

absolutely on *each other* for their meaning.”<sup>187</sup> These relations constitute their difference. With regard to rhetoric, Cunningham agrees with Wittgenstein when he says, “*Practice* gives the words their sense.”<sup>188</sup> For example, Lindbeck’s Yale school tells the narrative of the Son’s coming from the Father during the incarnation and the continuance of the salvific struggle when he sends His tag team partner the Spirit to intimately work within us and complete our salvation.

Likewise, Milbank’s post-modernism does not even mention procession or generation. Milbank’s team explores at greater depth the intimacy in which the phenomenal reality of Mary is impregnated with the Word of God, thus turning the *eros* toward the world through enrapturing bodies into new mystical *agape* love for the infinite.<sup>189</sup> Sensual love woos toward the divine mystical experience which is the only love to continue to enrapture our souls. This wooing is part of the superior friendship which the Son provides in His incarnate intimacy with the creation and especially the Christian.<sup>190</sup>

Webber identifies the paradigm theologian for the younger evangelicals to be Stanley Grenz.<sup>191</sup> While the “younger evangelicals” may not have published on Trinity, at least Grenz has identified his commitment to a social Trinity model that reflects the younger evangelicals concern for authentic relationship. Grenz sees the Trinity as “the *sine qua non* of the Christian faith.”<sup>192</sup> He follows Barth’s emphasis on the economic

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<sup>187</sup> David Cunningham, “The Trinity” in *Postmodern Theology*, p. 189.

<sup>188</sup> David Cunningham, “The Trinity” in *Postmodern Theology*, p. 195.

<sup>189</sup> Gerard Loughlin, “EROTICS: God’s sex” in *Radical Orthodoxy*, pp. 147–50.

<sup>190</sup> David Moss, “FRIENDSHIP: St. Anselm, *theoria* and the *convolution of sense*,” in *Radical Orthodoxy*, pp. 147–42.

<sup>191</sup> Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), p. 92.

<sup>192</sup> Stanley Grenz and John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 170.

Trinity and Frei's narrative theology's "Revelational Trinitarianism," appreciating Trinity as developed in the life and experience of the first century.

The early Christians faced a grave theological problem, namely how to reconcile their inherited commitment to a confession of the one God with the lordship of Jesus Christ and the experience of the Spirit. Far from a philosophical abstraction, therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity was the culmination of an attempt on the part of the church to address the central theological question regarding the content of the Christian faith, a question that arose out of the experience of the earliest followers of Jesus.<sup>193</sup>

He then advocates a social Trinity model pioneered by Leonard Hodgson and developed into academic awareness as a rival model by Jürgen Moltmann.<sup>194</sup> He follows Moltmann and Robert Jenson, who advocate "the idea that God finds his identity in the temporal events of the economy of salvation."<sup>195</sup> In this development, procession and generation are ancient traditional fossils replaced by living relationality. So the core idea of person is Catherine LaCugna's "toward another," which means that the essence of Trinity is "in relation to another."<sup>196</sup> Which implies that the Trinity is essentially a community of love.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, the Trinity has structural implications for Grenz in defining the

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<sup>193</sup> Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, p. 173.

<sup>194</sup> Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Croall Lectures, 1942–1943* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), especially pp. 49–55, 69–77, and 176–194 where Hodgson used social metaphors to express a trinity view that emphasized a Barthian economic model and an adoptionist Christ; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981) proposed a full scale social trinitarianistic model; cf. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. "The Hodgson-Welch Debate and the Social Analogy of the Trinity" (Ph. D. dissertation Princeton Theological Seminary, 1982), pp. 49–57, especially p. 51; Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Trinity in the Gospel of John: A Thematic Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986); and Cornelius Plantinga, "Social Trinity and Tritheism" in *Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement: Philosophical & Theological Essays* edited by Ronald J. Feenstra and Cornelius Plantinga (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989), which are polished presentations from a conference at Marquette University in 1988.

<sup>195</sup> Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, p. 191.

<sup>196</sup> Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 14–15; Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, pp. 193–194.

<sup>197</sup> Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, p. 195.

image of God as that of relationality in humans.<sup>198</sup> The result of this awareness is that we should strive for fellowship and community.

### Conclusion

Each approach had a role for tradition. Tradition is not neutral but tends to frame one's vision through which the person sees the world and God. I believe that the post-modern's are the most honest about the way terminology works sociologically on a community. However, as a critical realist I believe that truth value of terms should correspond to the essential reality to the extent that it is accessible. I believe that truth is accessible with critical precision upon moderate foundations. I believe that the scholarly precision of the Biblical theologians and scholarly exegetes is the most Biblical in their passionate practice to warrant their views in the Biblical text in its context, as the Word of God. I acknowledge that this commitment to Biblicism is a form of tradition that describes me. When the other views on tradition lose this Biblical warrant, and they all do at times, then they appear as just another post-modern language game, fitted to a traditional community, but degenerative in that they insulate that community from the truth of the Bible. As a critical realist, that draws me back to the methodology of the Biblical theologian. It is this method that also best exemplifies the spirit of the Reformation, which is also a traditional descriptive for me. However, as a Christian, I am committed to tolerance and love for those who disagree with me.

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<sup>198</sup> Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, pp. 197–202.