

A (Non-*Communio*) Trinitarian Ecclesiology: Grounded in Grace, Lived in Faith, Hope, and Charity

Theological Studies
2015, Vol. 76(3) 448–467
© Theological Studies, Inc. 2015
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0040563915593470
tsj.sagepub.com


Neil Ormerod

Australian Catholic University

Abstract

Communio ecclesiology has attracted a considerable theological following, but this article dwells on other avenues for relating the Trinity to the life of the church. A more traditional approach would relate the church to the processions and missions of the Son and Spirit. Moreover the recent development of Lonergan’s four-point hypothesis offers a more profound account of the church as an “icon” of the Trinity. Not only are such approaches more solidly grounded in trinitarian theology; they also provide interesting opportunities for relating the church to other religious traditions.

Keywords

Bernard Lonergan, *Communio* ecclesiology, missions, processions, Robert Doran, theological virtues, trinitarian relations, Trinity

It has become something of a theological commonplace to speak of the church as an “icon” of the Trinity, that somehow and in some sense (not always clearly defined) the life of the church is a participation in the life of the triune God. Often as not in the contemporary theological context, this claim will be expanded to speak of the church as a perfect community, reflecting the communal life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three Persons of the Trinity constitute a perfect community of love, and the church is called upon to mirror that in its own life. In broad terms we can

Corresponding author:

Neil Ormerod

Email: neil.ormerod@acu.edu.au

refer to this approach as a *communio* (or communion) ecclesiology. As Dennis Doyle explains, “Communion ecclesiology’s attention to *the Trinity* places community at the center of things. . . . Within the reality of God there exists not only oneness but also community.”¹ This dynamic of “unity and diversity” plays out in a number of ways, whether in the relationship between the local and universal church,² or ecumenically in terms of the relationship between different Christian churches,³ or simply as an antidote to the widespread experience of social alienation caused by modern individualism.⁴ Within the Catholic tradition this approach was given some authoritative approval by the 1985 Synod of Bishops, which declared, “The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of [Vatican II’s] documents.”⁵

Of course there is something very sound theologically about seeking connections between Christian faith in the triune God and our understanding of the nature and purpose of the church.⁶ If indeed we are “partakers of the divine life” (2 Pt 1:4) and that life is a trinitarian life, then undoubtedly there must be some way in which our life as a church reflects the life of the Trinity. The church should indeed be an icon of the Trinity. Nonetheless there are various grounds for concern about the way this is currently being played out in current ecclesiological writings. Concerns can be raised on both sides of the ledger, both in relation to the presentation of trinitarian theology and in terms of the ecclesiological implications of current writings.

The aim of this article is not just to raise these concerns, but to present an alternative trinitarian ecclesiology, one not based in the notion of *communio*, but understood in terms of the inner-trinitarian relations. In this way the article carries on a theological exploration of the implications of Lonergan’s so-called four-point hypothesis that Robert Doran and I have written about.⁷ In this regard my article goes beyond the account of the relationship

-
1. Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000) 14, emphasis original.
 2. This theme is explored in Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).
 3. See, for example, J. M. R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992).
 4. Walter Kasper, for example, begins his discussion of *communio* ecclesiology with appeals to the “danger of isolation, and the misery of loneliness” found in modern individualistic society. See Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989) 148; and Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988) 158: “We are not condemned to live alone, cut off from one another; we are called to live together and to enter into the communion of the Trinity.”
 5. “The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod” C 1, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/SYNFINAL.HTM>. (All URLs cited herein were accessed May 12, 2015.)
 6. As Vatican I stated, one of the functions of theology is to find connections between the mysteries of faith. See Vatican I’s Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius* chap. 4, translation from Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington: Georgetown University, 1990) 2:808.
 7. Neil Ormerod, “The Metaphysics of Holiness: Created Participation in the Divine Nature,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 79 (2014) 68–82; “The Grace–Nature Distinction and the Construction of Systematic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 75 (2014) 515–36; “The

between the Trinity and the church that I presented in my recent book, *Re-Visioning the Church*, which was based on a much more “classical” trinitarian stance.⁸ What Lonergan’s work allows, however, is a far richer account and one that deserves theological attention. And so the structure of this article is as follows: I begin with what I call a classical approach to the question of the relationship between the Trinity and the church; I then critique the more modern *communio* approach; I proceed to an account of the four-point hypothesis and its relationship to the classical theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, as envisaged by Doran; I then provide an account of a non*communio* trinitarian ecclesiology grounded in grace and lived out in faith, hope, and charity. Finally I extend the analysis to a consideration of the interreligious significance of the discussion.

A “Classical” Approach

Theology prior to Vatican II had already made fruitful connections between trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. We can find something of the flavor of such connections in the ecclesiology of Charles Journet, as recounted by Doyle. While struggling with the limitations of the manual tradition of the day, Journet’s own research into the patristic and Thomistic background led him to conclude:

In these great doctors [Augustine and Aquinas] I have found a theology of the Church more living, more far-reaching and more liberating than that which our manuals commonly contain. In them we feel the active presence of a vision of the Mystery of the Church understood as an extension of the Incarnation. That vision we find supported in the Fathers, Latin as well as Greek; it is supported by the whole tenor of the New Testament.⁹

While the manual tradition supported the notion of the Trinity as the remote, and Christ as the proximate, efficient cause of the church, it identified the formal cause with the hierarchy. Journet rejected this identification and in its place proposed the Holy Spirit as the formal cause.¹⁰ This step places the church within the ambit of the two missions, of the Son and the Spirit, grounded in the two trinitarian processions: the Son from the Father and the Spirit from the Father and the Son.¹¹ By participating in

Four-Point Hypothesis: Transpositions and Complications,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 77 (2012) 127–40; Robert M. Doran, *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, vol. 1, *Missions and Processions* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2012); “Imitating the Divine Relations: A Theological Contribution to Mimetic Theory,” *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 23 (2005) 149–86; “Being in Love with God: A Source of Analogies for Theological Understanding,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 73 (2008) 227–42.

8. Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

9. Charles Journet, *Church of the Word Incarnate: An Essay in Speculative Theology*, trans. A. H. C. Downs (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1955) xxx, quoted in Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* 41.

10. *Communion Ecclesiology* 41–42.

11. Despite the substantial debate over the *filioque*, it remains a firm element of the Western trinitarian tradition.

the saving mission of the Son, the church in some sense extends the Incarnation into human history. To carry out its mission, the church needs divine grace, the gift of God's Spirit poured into the hearts of the faithful (Rom 5:5); the church is thus empowered by its participation in the mission of the Spirit.

As Journet had discovered, such a perspective was not novel; it was well grounded in the Scriptures and in both the Greek and Latin Church Fathers. In particular Thomas Aquinas provides a thorough trinitarian theology of the processions and missions of the Son and Spirit that can underpin such an ecclesiology, though he himself did not produce a trinitarian systematic reflection on the nature of the church. Moving forward from Journet, we can find a similar trinitarian structure operating in the opening paragraphs of *Lumen gentium*.¹² Paragraph 2 begins with the "free and hidden plan" of the eternal Father; paragraph 3 deals with the mission of the Son "sent by the Father" to inaugurate the kingdom of God and reveals its mysteries to humankind; and paragraph 4 narrates the missions of the Holy Spirit: "When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continually sanctify the Church, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father" (emphasis added). The Latin word translated as "sent" in both cases is *missus*, the use of which immediately recalls the trinitarian *missio* of Son and Spirit.

This trajectory of linking the church with the concrete mission of Jesus is continued in both magisterial and theological writings. Pope John Paul II was very clear on the link in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*: "The Council emphasized the Church's 'missionary nature,' basing it in a dynamic way on the trinitarian mission itself. The missionary thrust therefore belongs to the very nature of the Christian life" (no. 1).¹³ This encyclical connects the church to the mission of Jesus through evoking the biblical notion of the kingdom of God (chap. 2) and to the mission of the Spirit, who is described as the "principal agent" of the church's mission (chap. 3). In theological writings, this trajectory can be found in those ecclesialogists (and missiologists) who take the church's mission as their starting point (the church as participation in the *missio Dei*); and who construct the contours of the life of the church by reference to Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God with its focus on overcoming evil¹⁴ and the ongoing need for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in working toward that kingdom.¹⁵

12. Available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

13. On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html.

14. Again to quote John Paul II, "Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness" (*Redemptoris missio* no.15). Also as David Bosch puts it, Jesus' preaching of and action toward the kingdom launches "an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations" (David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991] 32).

15. See John Fuellenbach: *Church: Community for the Kingdom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002); *The Kingdom of God: The Message of Jesus Today* (Maryknoll, NY:

This is certainly the approach I have taken in my own ecclesiological writings. In my book I identify five “theses” in relation to the nature and mission of the church:

Thesis 1: The mission of the Church is the historical prolongation of the mission of Jesus.¹⁶

Thesis 2: The mission of Jesus is the advancement of the kingdom of God amongst humanity.¹⁷

Thesis 3. Jesus achieves the advancement of the kingdom of God through a redemptive suffering, which overcomes evil through self-sacrificing love.¹⁸

Thesis 4. The mission of the Church is the transformation of the present situation to a new situation which more closely approximates the kingdom of God on earth, through the promotion of a self-sacrificing love which overcomes the evils of the present through redemptive suffering.¹⁹

Thesis 5: The Church is empowered in its mission by the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into the hearts of believers, giving them a love which is more powerful than evil, a fidelity to the mission of Jesus, and a hope that transcends all human expectations.²⁰

Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of this formulation, it locates the mission of the church in terms of the dual missions of the Son and Spirit and seeks to give a more concrete expression to the nature of that mission in terms of a more precise theological account of Jesus’ mission based on redemptive suffering overcoming evil. The final thesis connects the mission of the Spirit with the traditional theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, even though this connection remains relatively unintegrated within the trinitarian conception of the missions of either the Son or the Spirit.

It is difficult to know why exactly this classical approach has generally fallen from view among many contemporary ecclesialogists. It has strong theological credentials and magisterial support, yet it has been increasingly marginalized by the claims of an alternative trinitarian ecclesiology based not on the trinitarian missions, but on the notions of *perichoresis* or mutual indwelling of the divine Persons, forming the basis of an ideal community. I now turn to this approach.

Orbis, 1995); and the magisterial work of Bosch, *Transforming Mission*; and the historical study by Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004). This approach is, in my view, much stronger among missiologists than ecclesialogists in general.

16. Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church* 103–5.

17. *Ibid.* 105–8.

18. *Ibid.* 108–10.

19. *Ibid.* 110–11.

20. *Ibid.* 111–12.

Communio Ecclesiology and a Critique

In his book *Communion Ecclesiology*, Doyle notes:

Communion ecclesiology represents an attempt to move beyond the merely juridical and institutional understandings by emphasizing the mystical, sacramental, and historical dimensions of the church. It focuses on relationships, whether among the persons of the Trinity, among human beings and God, among the members of the Communion of Saints, among members of the parish, or among the bishops dispersed throughout the world.²¹

Doyle identifies four elements that constitute the key insights of this particular approach to ecclesiology: (1) it is a retrieval of a vision of the church drawn from the first millennium of its life; (2) it emphasizes the spiritual fellowship or communion between human beings and God; (3) it places a high value of visible unity expressed symbolically through shared participation in the Eucharist; and (4) it promotes a dynamic interplay between unity and diversity.²² Doyle explicitly juxtaposes this approach with one that “emphasizes historical development, practical change, and the service of the church to the world” often associated with terms such as “Pilgrim Church,” “People of God,” and “Servant Church,” and with approaches deemed juridical or overly institutional in their focus.²³

Significantly Doyle identifies the role played by the doctrine of the Trinity in communion ecclesiology: “Communion ecclesiology’s attention to *the Trinity* places community at the center of things. . . . There is one God, but within that one God is a relation among three persons. God’s relationality and God’s oneness are mutually interdependent; neither has priority over the other.”²⁴ Still Doyle is aware that such talk represents just one dimension, a religious dimension of the church, which must then go on to be related to the social and historical dimensions of the church. In the spirit of Avery Dulles’s *Models of the Church*, Doyle opts for a multidimensional approach to understanding the church.²⁵ It is not clear that some of those theologians he examines, given their strong dismissal of the symbol of “People of God” as merely sociological, share this openness.²⁶

Doyle goes on to give solid summaries of a variety of authors who fall under the communion umbrella, including Johann Adam Möhler, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Leonardo Boff, Elizabeth Johnson, Hans Küng, Jean-Marie Tillard, John Zizioulas, Miroslav Volf, and others. One can see from this list that Doyle has a very broad definition of communion ecclesiology. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that a

21. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* 12.

22. *Ibid.* 13.

23. *Ibid.* 11–13.

24. *Ibid.* 14.

25. See Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expanded ed. (Garden City, NY: Image, 1987).

26. See Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* 18, where he cites de Lubac, Balthasar, Ratzinger, and John Paul II in these terms.

number of these authors (Rahner, Congar, Balthasar, Boff, Johnson, Zizioulas, and Volf) have all written significant works on the Trinity, often in a directly ecclesiological context.²⁷

Overall this is an impressive theological pedigree, though at times one might think that the definition of communion is so broad as to push the boundaries too far. For example, Doyle places Journet within this movement, though as I noted above he fits more closely into the classical model based on the processions/missions. There is little in Journet's account to address issues of community, relationality, or personhood that are common to most of the authors considered. Still, this cadre constitutes a major theological movement. Wherein, then, lies the difficulty with the approach Doyle analyzes?

The first issue to note about many *communio* ecclesiologies is the relatively thin account they give of the Trinity itself. The focus is almost entirely on the question of three Persons, one God, and *perichoresis* or mutual indwelling of the Persons in the Trinity. The standard position is that persons are "persons-in-relationship," and that from this we can conclude to the importance of relationship for human beings; while from the equality of the Persons (*homoousios*) we can draw a conclusion about the nonhierarchical nature of such relationships. While this position is unexceptional in itself and can tend to the banal (e.g., unity in diversity and diversity in unity),²⁸ it pre-scinds almost entirely from the specificity of classical trinitarian doctrine. The Creed of Nicaea/Constantinople speaks not just of one God and three Persons, but quite specifically about the relationships between the Persons (God *from* God, begotten, not made; proceeds *from* the Father [and the Son]). The creed, at least in its Western form, does not talk about relationship in general, but about the specific relationships of Father *to* Son and of Father and Son *to* the Holy Spirit. These relationships are generally spoken of as processions, of the Son *from* the Father, and the Spirit *from* the Father and the Son.²⁹ The two processions are then linked in the Creed to two missions, so that "for the sake of us and our salvation" the Son "came down from heaven," while the Spirit "spoke through the prophets." But procession and mission are rarely

-
27. Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Seabury, 1974); Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Boff, *Trinity and Society*; Leonardo Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000); Volf, *After Our Likeness*; Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1985). Balthasar has not written a monograph on the Trinity, but his reflections on the Trinity and the paschal mystery have been very influential; see Anne Hunt, *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery: A Development in Recent Catholic Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1997) 57–89.
28. Kasper notes that "variety in unity and unity in variety is a concept that is better fitted for the trinitarian understanding of unity than a monolithic model of unity" (*Theology and Church* 160).
29. To refer to these relationships as two processions is common in Scholastic theology. It is perhaps less common in Eastern Orthodox theology and in Protestant theology.

mentioned in *communio* ecclesiologies. Instead, the processions are often viewed as a threat to the equality of the three Persons, implying some type of hierarchical ordering among them.³⁰ Without the processions, however, the missions bear no intrinsic relationship to God's trinitarian life.³¹ To fail to attend to the processions severs a genuine trinitarian connection between the mission of the church and the processions/missions of the Son and the Spirit. As a consequence the contours of the church's mission seem to have less to do with the concrete mission of Jesus' inaugurating the kingdom of God and more to do with general notions of building a (nonhierarchical) community of love. As I noted above, Doyle sets communion ecclesiology alongside approaches that emphasize "the service of the church to the world,"³² a juxtaposition that arises precisely because the connection between the mission of the church and the historical mission of Jesus is underplayed.

These trinitarian considerations are only some of the concerns that emerge in relation to communion ecclesiology. There are also concerns that are of a more directly ecclesiological nature. The first of these is drawn from a sociological observation. *Communio* ecclesiology bears a structural resemblance to a functionalist account of society.³³ Functionalism stresses values of harmony and integration, while tending to disvalue or ignore evidence of tensions or conflict. The standard critique of functionalism raised by more conflictualist approaches is that functionalism tends to reinforce the status quo, and fails to give adequate accounts of power and social change. In the same way, *communio* ecclesiologies tend to paper over tensions and conflicts, and when they arise, those who "cause" them can be accused of "breaking *communio*" with the church at large.³⁴ Attempts to stress equality in the church, or the nonhierarchical nature

30. This is evident in the writings of some liberation and feminist theologians who seem to have a particular difficulty with the notion of the processions and their possible relationship to a hierarchical ordering of the Persons. Both Boff (*Trinity and Society* 145–47) and Gavin D'Costa (*Sexing the Trinity: Gender, Culture, and the Divine* [London: SCM, 2000] 11–23) seek to symmetrize the processions in order to eliminate any sense of hierarchical ordering.

31. Bruce Marshall has written an excellent article on the neglect of the processions and missions in contemporary trinitarian theology, largely as a result of the dominance of Rahner's axiom on the economic and immanent Trinity ("The Unity of the Triune God: Reviving an Ancient Question," *Thomist* 74 [2010] 1–32). See also my comments on the state of trinitarian theology in Neil Ormerod, "What Is the Goal of Systematic Theology?," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74 (2009) 38–52.

32. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* 11–13.

33. For a fuller account of the different forms of social science and their relationship to ecclesiology, see Neil Ormerod, "Ecclesiology and the Social Sciences," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis Mudge (New York: Routledge, 2009) 639–54. There are also parallels here with the "mystical body of Christ" ecclesiology, as Edward Hahnenberg notes in his "The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005) 3–30.

34. And so when Australian Bishop William Morris was brought to Rome over statements he had made on married and women clergy he was told he had "broken communion" with the

of communion, can effectively mask the real power relations that exist within the church.³⁵ Overall I would argue that the symbol of *communio* as applied to the church is inherently conservative, resistant to change, and masks power relations operating within the church.³⁶

In *Re-Visioning the Church*, I draw a distinction, taken from Lonergan, between the ecclesial integrator and operator.³⁷ Any dynamic system such as the church exists in a dialectical tension of integration and transformation or operation. Viewed from this perspective, *communio* is a symbol of ecclesial integration; taken on its own it distorts our understanding of the whole. A symbol of operation that acts to transform the life of the church is needed. Theologically such a symbol can be found in a consideration of the church's mission, or the *missio Dei*, which of course can be related to the trinitarian missions identified above. *Communio* ecclesiologies are generally fairly weak on the question of mission: "To get lost in the joy and blessing of Christian fellowship means to forget the kingdom for which the church exists; it is also to forget the church's mission."³⁸ And if the church's very nature is missionary, this is no small oversight.

Because *communio* ecclesiologies tend to neglect concrete consideration of the church's mission, they also tend to prescind from historical details of the life of the church. Here we encounter a major methodological divide within ecclesiology. One might characterize the divide as one between an Aristotelian (realist) and a Platonic (idealist) approach to ecclesiology.³⁹ The Aristotelian approach takes as its starting

church. Oddly this did not require his excommunication, but merely removal from the office of bishop. He is still a priest in good standing in his diocese. See Stephen Crittenden, "The Inside Story of How Rome Ousted a Bold Bishop," *Global Mail*, February 14, 2012.

35. This is not a rejection or critique of such power relations. Authority is legitimate power, and structures of authority are essential to the life of the church. See Neil Ormerod, "Power and Authority—A Response to Bishop Cullinane," *Australasian Catholic Record* 82 (2005) 154–62; and Joseph Komonchak, "Authority and Magisterium," in *Vatican Authority and American Catholic Dissent*, ed. William W. May (New York: Crossroad, 1987) 103–14.
36. This is a good example of something Komonchak has identified, that ecclesiological language is not just concerned with the cognitive function of meaning, but often with the effective function; it seeks to effect a new reality by conforming the life of the church to a particular conception of church life (Joseph A. Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology*, Lonergan Workshop 11, Supplementary Issue, ed. Fred Lawrence [Boston: Boston College, 1995]).
37. Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church* 66–67.
38. Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988) 337.
39. Following the suggestion of Walter Kasper, who introduced this distinction in his debate with then Cardinal Ratzinger in their discussions on the role and significance of the local versus the universal church: "The conflict is between theological opinions and underlying philosophical assumptions. One side [Ratzinger] proceeds by Plato's method; its starting point is the primacy of an ideal that is a universal concept. The other side [Kasper] follows Aristotle's approach and sees the universal as existing in a concrete reality" (Walter

point the historical data of the church, a church of historically constituted communities that develop and change over time. The Platonic approach usually takes as its starting point a highly charged theological symbol of the church, such as the church as a body of Christ, the people of God or a divine communion. *Communio* ecclesiologies tend to this idealistic approach. They are less concerned with the actual church than with idealized constructs of the church.

Theologically this idealized approach can lead to what we might call an “over-realized” ecclesiology. When one stresses the church as ideal form, it is not difficult to elide the difference between the idealized construct and the reality it points to. The imperative to “become what you are” is lost in a vague sense of already being there, of manifesting the ideal. Religious language in particular is prone to this difficulty, of thinking that because we say the words, the reality is already there. And if the ideal is already realized, there can be no change, no dissension from what is. Of course we all want the church to be a safe, loving, caring community of people—to be what it is called to be—but often the reality is quite different.⁴⁰ While those elements are present, so are many other elements: tensions, conflicts, and even sin find their way into the life of the church. Once again we move in the direction of upholding the status quo, resisting change, and masking the reality of power and authority in the life of the church.

Here again an ecclesiology that focuses on mission has advantages. Mission is inherently “unrealized” prior to the eschaton. The mission of the church relates to the concrete task here and now, on what is to be done to move the present situation to one that more closely resembles the final kingdom of God. As Bosch puts it, Jesus’ preaching of and action toward the kingdom launches “an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations.”⁴¹ As long as evil has a place within human history, the mission of the church will be incomplete. While full communion with one another and with God is the final eschatological goal of that mission, and we may experience a foretaste of that communion in the life of the church, the mission draws us out of the intimacy of communion and into a struggle to actualize the kingdom, a struggle that transforms both the world and the church.⁴²

So far this analysis could be viewed as pushing us back to the more classical approach previously identified, one that is grounded in the twin missions of the Son and Spirit. The church’s participation in those missions would then be a genuine participation in the triune life of God, through the connection between those missions and the twin processions—indeed a substantial theological starting point. However, recent

Kasper, “A Friendly Reply to Cardinal Ratzinger on the Church,” *America* 184.14 [April 23–30, 2001] 8–14, at 13). On this methodological divide see also Neil Ormerod, “Recent Ecclesiology: A Survey,” *Pacifica* 21 (2008) 57–67.

40. This has of course been realized most strongly in the issue of sexual abuse in the church and the church’s inability to respond appropriately to this problem in the past.

41. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* 32.

42. It is significant here that the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* by Pope Francis is a rallying cry to make the church more mission-focused.

developments in trinitarian theology, initially proposed by Bernard Lonergan and further developed and exploited by Robert Doran and myself, point to a richer theological starting point than that proposed by the more traditional position. I now turn to that development.

The Four-Point Hypothesis and the Theological Virtues

Let me begin with a brief exposition of Lonergan's four-point hypothesis. To understand the four-point hypothesis one must first understand the problem it was meant to address, namely, whether and how individual Persons of the Trinity relate to the created order. The most prominent example of this phenomenon whereby one specific Person of the Trinity relates to the created order is the incarnation. Only the Son is incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, not the Father nor the Holy Spirit. A more difficult question is whether we can say that the Holy Spirit genuinely dwells in the hearts of believers. Both of these problems are instances where we want to be able to say that one Person of the Trinity exists in a special relationship with the created order.

We can see Augustine struggling with this issue in Book 5 of *De Trinitate*. He wants to refer to the Holy Spirit as Gift. But in the context of this book's discussion on the mutual relations within the Trinity he asks, Is gift a relational name, or it is a name that emerges only in the order of salvation when the Spirit is actually given to us?

How could he already be the divine substance, if he only is by being given, just as the Son gets his being that substance by being born, and does not just get being Son, which is said relationship-wise? Or is the answer that the Holy Spirit always proceeds and proceeds from eternity, not from a point of time; but because he so proceeds as to be giveable, he was already gift even before there was anyone to give him to?⁴³

To be given "from a point of time" is a contingent reality, part of the created order. Certainly Augustine wants the Spirit to proceed eternally, but leaves open the possibility of the Spirit being given at some point in time as a "donation," introducing a distinction between being a Gift and being actually donated. "The Spirit, to make myself clear, is everlastingly gift, but donation only from a point of time."⁴⁴ In other words a contingent reality is being predicated of the Spirit as a donation, which arises from his personal identity as Gift, but which is distinct from it, precisely as contingent.

Augustine immediately enters into a discussion on the whole question of the relationship between God and creation and how contingent realities can be predicated of God. "Look, this is the problem: He cannot be everlastingly lord, or we would be compelled to say that creation is everlasting, because he would only be everlastingly lord if creation were everlastingly serving him."⁴⁵ The discussion that follows is a classical exposition of the issue of contingent predication:

43. Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., trans. Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City, 1991) 202. *De Trin.* 5.16.

44. *Ibid.* 202. *De Trin.* 5.17.

45. *Ibid.*

Thus when [God] is called something with reference to creation, while indeed he begins to be called it in time, we should understand that this does not involve anything happening to God's own substance, but only to the created thing to which the relationship predicated of him refers. . . . So it is clear that anything that can be said about God in time which was not said about him before is said by way of relationship, and not yet by way of a modification of God, as though something has modified him.⁴⁶

Book 5 ends there without seeking to apply the logic of contingent predication to the individual Persons of the Trinity, but in fact Augustine had laid the groundwork for Lonergan's four-point hypothesis.

The next stage toward Lonergan's development is found in the more precise position of Aquinas on the relationship between the processions and the missions. The processions specify an internal trinitarian relation: the Father generates the Son; the Father and the Son breathe forth the Spirit. The Son and the Spirit are the terms of these respective relations. What the missions add to this scheme is a created contingent reality which acts as a new "term" for the trinitarian relation. As Aquinas puts it:

Mission signifies not only procession from the principle, but also determines the temporal term of the procession. Hence mission is only temporal. Or we may say that it includes the eternal procession, with the addition of a temporal effect. For the relation of a divine person to His principle must be eternal. Hence the procession may be called a twin procession, eternal and temporal, not that there is a double relation to the principle, but a double term, temporal and eternal.⁴⁷

Because of this contingent reality (or what Aquinas refers to as a "temporal term") we can genuinely say that the Son is incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, and that the Holy Spirit truly dwells within the sanctified. This is the framework of missions/processions I identified in the classical approach above.

What Lonergan effectively does is generalize the classical construction from a consideration of the two processions to take into account the four trinitarian relations. These four relations are the relation of Father to Son (paternity); of Son to Father (filiation); of Father and Son to the Spirit (active spiration); and Spirit to Father and Son (passive spiration). Two of these relations reflect the two processions (paternity and active spiration), while the other two are their reverse relation. Thus two processions logically provide us with four relations. Lonergan essentially uses the logic of Aquinas (i.e., the processions/missions involve "not . . . a double relation to the principle, but a double term, temporal and eternal"), applies it to the four trinitarian relations to postulate four created participations in the divine nature, and then correlates these relations with "four absolutely supernatural realities": paternity with the secondary act of existence in the Incarnation; filiation with the light of glory; active spiration with

46. Ibid. 204. *De Trin.* 5.17.

47. *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) 1, q. 43, a. 2, ad 3; translation from *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947–1948).

sanctifying grace; and passive spiration with the habit of charity.⁴⁸ In this way Lonergan is able to add two further trinitarian participations in the divine nature, the habit of charity and the light of glory, to the more familiar participations related to the Incarnation and sanctifying grace. This is a considerable enrichment of the classical scheme.⁴⁹

In a further development of Lonergan's proposal, Doran has suggested some additional considerations.⁵⁰ Lonergan's hypothesis envisages participations in the divine nature that relate to sanctifying grace and the habit of charity. Might there be ways in which the other modes of participation relate to other aspects of the Christian life? The first possibility that comes to mind is a nonhypostatic created participation in paternity that would constitute an indwelling of the Son ("not I but Christ lives in me"), something Aquinas considers in terms of an "invisible mission" of the Son.⁵¹ As the Son is the divine yes of the Father, so the indwelling of the Son joins our yes of faith to that of the Son, where faith is here conceived as "knowledge born of religious love."⁵² While Lonergan did not take this step, it seems to me entirely consistent with his approach.

We now have a scheme that includes sanctifying grace and the theological virtues of charity and faith. Given the connection of the fourth created participation in the divine nature, filiation, with the light of glory, it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that an anticipatory participation with the relation to filiation may be found in the theological virtue of hope. In Doran's words:

Finally the light of glory as the created consequent condition of beatific knowledge in the created participation in and imitation of filiation, as in the Holy Spirit the Son brings us, his brothers and sisters, children by adoption, perfectly back to the Father. The disposition of hope that flows from the gift of God's love is our present historical participation in this ultimately eschatological relation.⁵³

48. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, trans. Michael Shields (Toronto: Toronto University, 2007) 471–73. The structure may be initially confusing, but it is important to keep in mind that the created participations relate to the term of the relations; hence paternity correlates with the Incarnation because the term of paternity is the Son.

49. For more details see Ormerod, "The Grace–Nature Distinction and the Construction of Systematic Theology"; and "Two Points or Four?—Rahner and Lonergan on Trinity, Incarnation, Grace, and Beatific Vision," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007) 661–73.

50. Most fully in Doran, *Missions and Processions*.

51. *ST* 1, q. 43, a. 2. See also Ormerod, "Four-Point Hypothesis."

52. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1972) 115. In Thomistic terms this would be "formed faith" not the unformed faith that is not salvific.

53. Doran, *Missions and Processions* 40–41. The notion of "created consequent condition" is Doran's transposition of Aquinas's position that "mission signifies not only procession from the principle, but also determines the temporal term of the procession" (quoted above).

Taken together then, Doran's extension of Lonergan's position locates the theological reality of sanctifying grace and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity as created participations in the trinitarian relations. The relations between these realities of the Christian life reflect the relations between the trinitarian relations, linking grace with charity, and faith with hope.⁵⁴ Inasmuch as a Christian is grounded in sanctifying grace and lives a life of faith, hope, and charity, she is imitating the divine trinitarian relations and is truly, then, an icon of the Trinity.

This connection between sanctifying grace and the subsequent theological virtues with the four trinitarian relations allows a further connection with what Lonergan refers to as the divinely originated "solution to the problem of evil."⁵⁵ As Lonergan notes, "Since God is the first agent of every event and emergence and development, the question really is what God is or has been doing about the fact of evil."⁵⁶ In chapter 20 of *Insight*, Lonergan develops a heuristic structure for the divinely originated solution to the problem of evil that has at its heart three "conjugate forms" identified as: charity to provide a universal willingness for the good; faith to inform the intellect of the nature of the solution; and hope to help overcome the difficulties in implementing the solution.⁵⁷ Of course Lonergan is there speaking as a philosopher, but a philosopher with a clear theological intent.⁵⁸ Of interest is the way the four-point hypothesis allows us to align this philosophical heuristic structure of the solution to the problem of evil with a trinitarian relationship between sanctifying grace and the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.⁵⁹

Viewed in this context, our sharing in the trinitarian life through created participations in the divine life, leading to a life grounded in grace and informed by the theological virtues, becomes a constitutive element of the divinely originated solution to the problem of evil. The Trinity shares the divine life with us, so that evil may be overcome in the world. In a previous article I argued that the four-point hypothesis provides a resolution of the grace–nature debate, allowing for a genuine elevation of human nature through our participation in the inner-trinitarian relations.⁶⁰ Now we can

54. For more on this relationship between the theological virtues see Ormerod, "The Metaphysics of Holiness."

55. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992) chap. 20, 709–51.

56. *Ibid.* 709.

57. *Ibid.* 718–25.

58. However, it might help explain why Lonergan does not refer to the dynamic state of being loved by God, or sanctifying grace, from which the other virtues emerge. Also in metaphysical terms, sanctifying grace pertains to central form, as an elevation of that form, not a conjugate form inhering in our central form. See Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, "Sanctifying Grace in a 'Methodical Theology,'" *Theological Studies* 68 (2007) 52–76.

59. Some nuancing is required, in that Lonergan's use of the term "faith" in *Insight* differs from his use of the term in his later writings such as *Method in Theology*. *Insight* operates with a more cognitive understanding of faith as belief, whereas in *Method* Lonergan distinguishes faith and belief.

60. Neil Ormerod, "An Addendum to the Grace–Nature Distinction," *Theological Studies* 75 (2014) 890–98.

grasp how the same structure provides a theological account of the genuine healing of humanity. A traditional theology of grace spoke of grace as both healing and elevating. The four-point hypothesis allows for these two dimensions of the work of grace to be integrated into a single theological perspective.

The other advantage of linking grace and the theological virtues with the solution to the problem of evil is that it moves us beyond the more individual account of the believer as an icon of the Trinity into a more historically sensitive context.⁶¹ The problem of evil is not just an individual concern, but permeates human history, distorting our cultures and disrupting our social existence. In place of our natural orientation to meaning, truth, and goodness, we find cultural ideologies that truncate their account of human existence to being a bundle of economic wants and needs, viewing our social existence as a manifestation of the will to power, and so on (cultural sin). In place of a social existence manifesting a cooperative concern for the common good, we find institutional expressions of power and corruption, of the structure of bias, greed, and oppression (social sin). The life of the theological virtues, grounded in sanctifying grace, goes beyond our personal conversion away from evil to call us to engage in world transformation, to move toward the manifestation of God's kingdom on earth.

Church: A Community Grounded in Grace, Lived in Faith, Hope, and Charity

Bringing to the foreground this historical dimension to the problem of evil and its divinely originated solution allows us to move to a more concrete consideration of the church and its mission. The divine solution to the problem of evil elicits an *ecclesial* response; it creates a community whose divinely given responsibility is to:

- Mediate the experience of God's love flooding our hearts through prayer, liturgy, and sacraments, grounding its members in sanctifying grace. Primarily these elements mediate the experience that God loves us, making us divinely loveable through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Without this love as our foundation, working for the kingdom becomes an exercise in masochism.
- Promote, through the contemplation of exemplary persons (the lives of the saints) and practices of spiritual self-discipline, a life of generous and sacrificial love as the means for overcoming the effects of sin and evil in the world and so building God's, to love the world as God loves it.
- Model a living hope that the adversities of the present struggle with evil are not the last word, but that a hope is given to us that goes beyond the present life, a

61. As Jacobs-Vandegeer notes, an account of the operation of saving grace "must provide an explanatory (rather than descriptive) account of how grace completes and perfects nature, but now the focus shifts from the individual person to the ordered totality of graced relations in the broad sweep of human history" ("The Unity of Salvation: Divine Missions, the Church, and World Religions," *Theological Studies* 75 [2014] 260–83 at 278).

hope for human flourishing grounded in God's love that can sustain us beyond our present travails even if they were to end in our death.

- Open our minds through faith ("knowledge born of religious love") to the communally held beliefs that counter the distorting ideologies that truncate human existence, by affirming our transcendent origin and end, our vocation to union with God and the means God has established toward reaching that union. In particular we are called to believe that we are loved by God and to live out that love sacrificially in order to overcome evil in the world; thus despite the difficulties we encounter we can hope in a love that is more powerful than death.

The work of the church as a whole is to promote lives grounded in grace and lived out in faith, hope, and charity. Inasmuch as the church undertakes this work, the church as a whole is an icon of the Trinity. The church as a whole then participates in created participations of the divine nature that are imitative of the four trinitarian relations.

Such a stance is not the whole of ecclesiology, but pertains to what I call the religious dimension of ecclesiology.⁶² A fuller account of the church must grasp how this religious dimension relates to the moral, cultural, and social dimensions of the life of the church, to then understand the unfolding of the actual life of the church in its successes and failures through this lens (or what Lonergan calls an "upper blade").⁶³ Such a project is a much larger undertaking, of course. What I have demonstrated is an enrichment of the more classical approach obtained through the theology of the Trinity found in Lonergan's four-point hypothesis. This theology provides an alternative to the claims of *communio* ecclesiology for presenting the life of the church as iconic of the life of the Trinity. The focus on grace and the three theological virtues, as genuinely trinitarian, provides a more robust and substantial account of the life of the church's mission to the world than a *communio* approach can sustain, without losing any trinitarian depth.

The Trinitarian Dimensions of Religious Pluralism

Can we push the question further into an account of the trinitarian dimensions of religious pluralism? And if so, how might this play out theologically? Various attempts have been made in this direction, notably by Jacques Dupuis and Gavin D'Costa.⁶⁴ The document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus (DI)*, also seeks to provide a trinitarian framework for directing our considerations of Jesus and the kingdom of God, the work of the Spirit beyond the boundaries of the historical church, the nature and mission of the church, and the relationship of each of these to non-Christian religious traditions.⁶⁵ My reading of *DI* is that it sought to resist any a priori reading

62. See *Re-visioning Ecclesiology* 121–34.

63. Lonergan, *Insight* 337.

64. See Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002); and Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000).

65. See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html.

of these traditions, while asking theologians to take the specifics of each religious tradition seriously as their starting point: “Theology today, in its reflection on the existence of other religious experiences and on their meaning in God’s salvific plan, is invited to explore if and in what way the historical figures and positive elements of these religions may fall within the divine plan of salvation” (*DI* no. 14). Blanket theological evaluations of other religious traditions are therefore precluded, opening the door for “historical figures and positive elements” to be explored. *DI* endeavored to preserve the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the necessary role of the church, and the providential ordering of all religious traditions toward Christ and the church. Put simply, it sought to balance the historical specificity of the Incarnation and the church with the universal salvific will of God. Finally, I would note that *DI* sought to do all this within what I have called the classical approach of the two divine missions linked to the two divine processions.⁶⁶

How might the four-point hypothesis and the type of ecclesiology it envisages reframe the issues raised by *DI*? I do not mean to say that these issues could not be handled in the classical approach, but that the new approach is far richer and allows, I believe, for greater precision.

The first point to note is that if we consider the four created communications of the divine nature postulated by Lonergan—sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation, and the light of glory—each of these is present in the historical person of Jesus Christ. He is the one in whom the “fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col 1:19). He is the incarnation of the Son; tradition holds that he enjoyed the beatific vision; he is loved by the Father with the Holy Spirit; and he embodies the self-sacrificial love that is the mark of the habit of charity and the foundation of the kingdom. In this sense we can understand *DI*’s assertion that the “full and complete revelation of the salvific mystery of God is given in Jesus Christ” (no. 6).

Second, the emergence of the church from the mission of Jesus is not just some minor or accidental phenomenon. Without entering into the disputed territory over whether Jesus “founded” the church in some juridical sense,⁶⁷ it can be argued that unless there emerged a historical community that carried forward his mission, Jesus’ mission would have been historically ineffective. The existence of the church is an essential component in the solution to the problem of evil, something that becomes increasingly apparent once we move beyond questions of individual salvation and begin to think more historically. Salvation is carried forward in the life of the church. As *DI* no. 16 puts the matter, “Therefore, the fullness of Christ’s salvific mystery belongs also to the Church, inseparably united to her Lord.”

Third, nonetheless, the church does not exist for its own sake, but for the sake of its mission, the building of the kingdom of God. As Pope Francis reiterates, an inwardly looking church is failing in its mission.⁶⁸ Likewise *DI* affirms that the church “is

66. For an excellent account of the role of the church in relation to non-Christian religions operating within the classical framework, see Jacobs-Vandegeer, “The Unity of Salvation.”

67. See, e.g., the discussion in Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1984) 60–192.

68. See, e.g., Francis’s preconclave intervention, available at http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/03/27/bergoglios_intervention_a_diagnosis_of_the_problems_in_the_church/en1-677269.

therefore the sign and instrument of the kingdom; she is called to announce and to establish the kingdom” (no. 18). But the church does not constrain the kingdom or possess it; rather the kingdom possesses the church. The kingdom’s boundaries extend to the whole of humanity:

The kingdom is the concern of *everyone*: individuals, society, and the world. Working for the kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God’s activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. *Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms*. In a word, the kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God’s plan of salvation in all its fullness.⁶⁹

The kingdom is a concern for everyone because evil touches everyone. Wherever people strive for liberation from evil “in all its forms,” there the kingdom of God is being built. A genuine working for liberation from evil must be grounded in grace and lived out in charity, hope, and faith.

Fourth, while the church is grounded in grace and promotes lives of faith, hope, and charity, grace and the theological virtues are to be found outside the church as well. Our encounter with people of other faith traditions has clearly revealed the presence of genuine holiness outside the church. God’s will for salvation is unlimited (1 Tim 2:4), and salvation is always the work of divine grace.⁷⁰ However, in light of *DI*’s rejection of an a priori approach to the question of religious pluralism, my approach in this article provides a heuristic for addressing the questions raised by *DI*: “to explore if and in what way the historical figures and positive elements of these religions may fall within the divine plan of salvation” (no. 14). As a heuristic structure it provides a series of questions that can be addressed to the concrete history of any religious community. Do we find examples of people who rest in the love of God poured into their hearts? Do we find people who respond to that gift through an active love of God and neighbor, giving rise to that self-sacrificial love that overcomes the impact of sin and evil in the world? Do we find people whose lives are a living yes to all that God offers them within the providence of their historical contexts?⁷¹ Do we find people who live with

69. *Redemptoris missio* no. 15, emphasis added.

70. As *DI* no. 20 notes, “[Jesus] himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door.’ This doctrine must not be set against the universal salvific will of God (cf. 1 Tim 2:4); ‘it is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this salvation.’” See also *DI* nos. 21–22.

71. Perhaps the weakest element of *DI* is its handling of the question of faith. It distinguishes “theological faith” from “belief” as found in other religions (*DI* no. 7). Theological faith is then defined as “acceptance of the truth revealed by the One and Triune God.” This seems to imply that only Christians have “faith,” while other religious believers do not. It seems to link faith with explicitly Christian beliefs. The approach I adopted here follows Lonergan in defining faith as “knowledge born of religious love” and distinguishes faith and beliefs. This does not diminish the importance of beliefs, which he refers to as

the hope that their fundamental orientation to meaning, truth, and value will find fulfillment, a hope that sustains them through the difficulties and adversities of life? Finally, do their communities, their sacred texts, beliefs, and practices promote these realities in the lives of their adherents or marginalize and discredit them? Answering such questions in the affirmative implies a genuine trinitarian presence in the lives of these communities.

Fifth, inasmuch as, and to the extent that, various religious traditions and historical figures promote these realities in their followers, they are “working for liberation from evil in all its forms” and so contribute to “building the kingdom.”⁷² As such, followers of other religions participate in the work of Christ and his church and so have “a mysterious relationship to the Church” (*DI* no. 21) and to Christ who is the cause of all saving grace. Religious pluralism does not diminish the uniqueness of Christ, nor does it undermine the role of the church as the historical mediator of salvation, conceived as building God’s kingdom through working for liberation from evil in all its forms. Religious pluralism does, however, allow us to recognize that other religious traditions and figures also contribute to building God’s kingdom, as they too are grounded in grace and informed by the theological virtues of charity, hope, and faith.⁷³ They too then become icons of the Trinity, which is the source of all salvation.

Conclusion

As noted at the outset of this article, there is something theologically sound about seeking to make connections between the doctrine of the Trinity and our understanding of the church. The value of such connections will be found in their fruitfulness, that is, in their ability to illuminate a theological depth to the topic at hand. Recent advances in relation to the theology of the Trinity as expounded by Lonergan and Doran allow for an extension of the classical approach to ecclesiology, based on the trinitarian processions, to a fuller account based on the four trinitarian relations. Allowing this extension enables us to view the church as a community grounded in grace and informed by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. This not only deepens our understanding of the church as an icon of the Trinity—as church members participate in the four trinitarian relations—but it also provides a springboard for expanding the conversation to other religious traditions and their relationship to both Christ and the church. I would further contend that this schema provides a far richer account of the relationship between the Trinity and the church than approaches that take their stand in the trinitarian *communio*.

an “outer word” from God, but focuses on the more universal experience of faith as a key component of religious experience. Interestingly, *DI* says nothing of consequence on the theological virtue of hope in an interreligious setting.

72. *Redemptoris missio* no. 15.

73. As Jacobs-Vandegeer notes, “Non-Christians are neither formally nor anonymously part of the church, but they participate in the supernatural order of salvation, the constitution of which requires the church” (“The Unity of Salvation” 281).

Author biography

Neil Ormerod received his PhD from the University of New South Wales in pure mathematics and his DTheol from Melbourne College of Divinity. He is currently professor of theology and a member of the Institute of Religion and Critical Inquiry, Australian Catholic University. With special competencies in Lonergan studies, historical ecclesiology, trinitarian theology, and natural theology, he has most recently published: *A Public God: Natural Theology Reconsidered* (2015); *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (2014); “An Addendum to the Grace–Nature Distinction,” *Theological Studies* 75.4 (2014); “Questioning Desire—Lonergan, Girard and Buddhism,” *Louvain Studies* 36.4 (2012) (appeared in 2014); and “The Grace–Nature Distinction and the Construction of a Systematic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 75.3 (2014). Forthcoming from Fortress Press is his *Foundational Theology: A New Approach to Catholic Fundamental Theology*, coauthored with Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer.