

THE TRINITY

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By

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## The Mystery of the Trinity

J. Rodman Williams writes, “ Now that we have stated these various things about the Triune God, we must confess that throughout we have been dealing with the realm of mystery”<sup>1</sup>. Millard J. Erickson Writes, “In the final analysis, the Trinity is incomprehensible. We cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity”<sup>2</sup>. In the New Dictionary of Theology, the author of the article on God writes, “Being unique, the Trinity is to us a mystery, that is, a matter of incomprehensible fact...”<sup>3</sup>. Wayne Grudem, in his Systematic Theology confesses, “In one sense, the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery that we will never be able to understand fully.”<sup>4</sup> Augustine reminds us of the difficulty of understanding The Trinity by pointing out, “...certain knowledge will not be made perfect, except after this life, when we shall see face to face.”<sup>5</sup> If the doctrine of the Trinity is so difficult, why does anyone talk about it? How did the doctrine of the Trinity ever emerge? Is it really that important to us if it is so hard to understand? How can our relationship with God actually be dependent upon a teaching that is so difficult to explain?

One of the main reasons for the rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity is its difficulty, or what might be called its mystery. The official website for the United Pentecostal Church International, a denomination that rejects the Trinity, answers these questions about the Godhead:

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<sup>1</sup> J. Rodman Williams, Renewal Theology, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), Pg. 94

<sup>2</sup> Millard J. Erickson, Christian Theology, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), Pg. 363

<sup>3</sup> Sinclair G. Ferguson, New Dictionary of Theology, (Downers Grove, ILL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), Pg. 275

<sup>4</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1994) Pg. 231

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, On the Trinity, Book IX Chapter 1, <http://www.neewadvent.org/fathers/130109.htm>

1. Is the word *trinity* in the Bible? No.
2. Does the Bible say that there are three persons in the Godhead? No.
3. Does the Bible speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Yes.
4. Do these titles as used in Matthew 28:19 mean that there are three separate and distinct persons in the Godhead? No, they refer to three offices, roles, or relationship to humanity.
5. Does the Bible use the word three in reference to God? Only one verse in the entire Bible does so-I John 5:7. It speaks of the Father, the Word (instead of Son), and the Holy Ghost, and it concludes by saying, "These three are one."
6. Does the Bible use the word one in reference to God? Yes, many times. For example, see Zechariah 14:9; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 23:9; Mark 12:29, 32; John 8:41; 10:30; Romans 3:30; I Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 3:20; I Timothy 2:5; James 2:19.
7. Can the mystery of the Godhead be understood? Yes. Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16.<sup>6</sup>

It is apparent from the answer to number "7" that for the United Pentecostal Churches, removing the teaching of the Triune God relieves any struggle with the mystery in God's nature.

The Watchtower Organization, or what most know as the Jehovah's Witnesses, has a similar struggle. An official website for the organization makes much of the difficulty of the doctrine of the Trinity, rejecting it because it seems so confusing and not subject to human understanding.

Thus, the Trinity is considered to be "one God in three Persons." Each is said to be without beginning, having existed for eternity. Each is said to be almighty, with each neither greater nor lesser than the others. Is such reasoning hard to follow? Many sincere believers have found it to be confusing, contrary to normal reason, unlike anything in their experience. How, they ask, could the Father be God, Jesus be God, and the holy spirit be God, yet there be not three Gods but only one God... would God be responsible for a doctrine about himself that is so confusing that even Hebrew, Greek, and Latin scholars cannot really explain it?<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Copyright 2004 \* United Pentecostal Church International \* All Rights Reserved, [http://www.upci.org/doctrine/60\\_questions.asp](http://www.upci.org/doctrine/60_questions.asp)

<sup>7</sup> Copyright © 2004 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.watchtower.org/copyright.htm>

The Latter Day Saints also have a similar position. One Mormon writer puts it this way:

However, when I confront a Christian apologist, who is quite aware of the original Trinity's implications, I am befuddled. First allow me to say that I am one who hates to generalize, but in most cases, Christian apologists usually attempt to explain the Trinity concept to me with the idea that God is simply "unexplainable," so it is beyond our understanding how God can be three distinct persons, yet not being separate in substance. This particular non-explanation, leaves no room for further discussion since God has now become a "What" and our feeble human minds are not able to grasp his nature or his relationship with the other two in the Trinity. Of course, this non-answer ignores certain passages in the Bible which explain the pure necessity in knowing who or what God really is...<sup>8</sup>

The same could be demonstrated from every teaching that rejects the doctrine of the Trinity. The fact that the Trinity is hard to explain, and the knowledge that whatever is said about the Trinity is inadequate and falls short of human understanding is a major stumbling block to many. However, what would one expect when one tries to give a definition of God? Something exactly like the mystery of the Trinity should emerge, otherwise God would not be God. How can the finite comprehend the infinite? How can the created understand the Creator? If the human mind can successfully comprehend God, would that not mean that the human mind was greater than God? If any definition of God loses the element of mystery, can it be a true definition?

God Himself said through the prophet Isaiah,

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”<sup>9</sup> (Isaiah 55:8-9)

<sup>8</sup> Kevin J. Graham, L.D.S. Files, <http://www.lds.npl.com/link/?902119033>

<sup>9</sup> All Scriptures quoted from The New American Standard Bible, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999)

No one should be ashamed, when it comes to talking about the nature and attributes of God, that human beings ultimately would have to retreat in humility to a confession “that throughout we have been dealing with the realm of mystery.” However, while it is true that the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery, yet it is not as though one can say nothing more about it. There is truth that we can comprehend about God’s triune nature; truth that He has revealed.

### A Divine Revelation

How did the Christian church ever develop such a doctrine? Can this teaching that is so hard to explain be that important to us? In the first place, the doctrine of the Trinity does not originate with man. It is a response to God’s revelation of Himself. The nature of God and what He is like, His attributes, are not for anyone to simply decide what they like or what they can understand. In fact, the first two of the Ten Commandments speak directly to this issue.

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I the Lord your God, am a jealous God... (Exodus 20:1-5)

The people to whom this revelation came had been living in a land of idols. It was common to worship as a god everything from the sun in the sky to the river that ran through their land. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not to be understood in that manner. He was above all creation. This God was greater than human understanding.

He was not to be pictured or worshipped in ways men and women imagined. However, if God cannot be known through our imagination or through our understanding, then how is He to be known?

J. Rodman Williams states the issue this way.

All knowledge must be prefaced by the realization that God Himself cannot be known as other things or persons are. He is altogether veiled from human perception. In this sense, He is the God who dwells in “thick darkness” (I Kings 8:12). God is the *mysterium tremendum*, a vast mystery not possible to comprehend in any ordinary manner. The fact that God is God and not man signifies mystery and the otherness of all knowledge relating to Him... First, and primarily, the problem of the knowledge of God rests in the fact that God is infinite and man is finite... God cannot be discovered, no matter how diligent the effort... The finite is not capable of the infinite. The highest achievement of the human mind and spirit fall short of arriving at the knowledge of God.<sup>10</sup>

If, as Williams tells us, human wisdom cannot discover nor comprehend God, how are human beings to know anything about God? The answer is that God must reveal Himself. God did reveal Himself to humanity, not only through what he has made, but through events in history recorded in the bible, culminating in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. These recordings are the God-breathed revelation to which humanity must humbly come and learn from. It is in the pages of these recordings, God’s revelations about Himself, that one encounters the mystery of the Trinity.

It is true, that the word trinity is not in the Bible. Trinity is man’s word, used to describe what God reveals about Himself. Phillip Schaff tells us that doctrine, and the teaching of the triune nature of God that is part of every true Christian doctrine, is not God’s “word to men but a word of men to God, in response to His revelation.”<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Williams Pg. 31

<sup>11</sup> Phillip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1931) Pg. 16

doctrine of the Trinity is man's response to God's revelation of Himself. It is the only conclusion one can come to and hold faithfully all that God reveals about Himself. To teach anything else is to do injustice to some aspect of the revelation of God.

What then does the scripture reveal about God? How is the mystery of the Trinity revealed in the scripture? The answer to that is not found in any one passage but the summation of all that is revealed about God. What the scripture reveals can be summarized in essentially three statements. First, there is only one God. Second, there are three distinct persons that are called God. Third, each person is revealed as fully God.

### One God

The first thing one discovers when one opens the pages of the Bible is the revelation that there is just one God. To most, that seems rather rudimentary. Most of us however, have grown up in a culture that has been formed by that understanding. In the time the scripture was given, it was rather unique. God called His people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, away from the accepted "polytheistic"<sup>12</sup> views of the surrounding world and revealed Himself as the only God.

Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.  
(Deuteronomy 4:39)

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God. The Lord is one!  
(Deuteronomy 6:4)

"You are My witness", declares the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me."

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<sup>12</sup> The belief in many gods

(Isaiah 43:10)

Thus says the Lord, your redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb. I the Lord, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself and spreading out the earth all alone...  
(Isaiah 44:24)

I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God.  
(Isaiah 45:5)

The followers of Jesus were equally committed to this basic truth. For them, there was only one God. In fact, the early Christians were actually called atheists by the surrounding cultures because they rejected the many gods of their pagan neighbors and worshipped only one God, the creator of all things.

He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light...  
(I Timothy 6:15-16)

You believe that God is one. You do well...  
(James 2:19)

For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him...  
(I Corinthians 8:5-6)

When the Bible reveals to us that there is only one God, it means precisely that. God emphatically shared that He was God alone, and that He will not share His glory with anyone on earth or in heaven. He alone is to be worshipped, for there is none other.

I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.  
(Isaiah 42:8)



You shall have no other gods before (besides) Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I the Lord your God, am a jealous God...  
(Exodus 20:3-65)

Any teaching that claims to be a response to the biblical revelation of God then must be monotheistic<sup>13</sup>. There is only one God, who is the creator of all things.

### Plurality in One God

In the very revelation of this one God however, an oddity is revealed. Even in the very earliest communications, there is a hint of plurality in God's nature. If it weren't for the later revelations of scripture regarding the Father, Son and Spirit, one might not make much of the oddities. However, in light of those later revelations, one can only conclude that the triune nature of God was being at least hinted at.

In Genesis 1:1, the very first Hebrew name for God is Elohim. "This is a generic name used to refer to other gods as well. When used with reference to Israel's God, it is generally, but not always, found in the plural."<sup>14</sup> Many see in this an implication of the triune nature of God.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore there are several peculiar passages where God is revealed speaking in a plural form.

"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."  
(Genesis 1:26)

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<sup>13</sup> Belief in one God

<sup>14</sup> Erickson Pg. 353

<sup>15</sup> Williams Pg. 85

“Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil...” (Genesis 3:22)

“Come, let Us go down...” (Genesis 11:7)

Then I heard a voice saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” (Isaiah 6:8)

This last example is especially interesting because of the shift from singular to plural. It must be noted that some see in these statements merely “plurals of majesty, a form of speech a king would use in saying, for example, ‘We are pleased to grant your request.’ However, in Old testament Hebrew, there are no other examples of a monarch using plural verbs or plural pronouns of himself in such a ‘plural of majesty,’ so this suggestion has no evidence to support it.”<sup>16</sup>

By themselves, these examples may not mean very much, but coupled with the further revelations concerning God throughout the rest of scripture, they stand as clear examples of a plurality in the nature of the one God.

### God the Father

When the Bible speaks of God as Father, it speaks of two things. It speaks of God in totality as the creator or source of all things. In that sense He is the Father of us all; He is the Father of all creation. The scripture also speaks of the Father in a more specific sense. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Christ, becomes the Father of all believers.

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<sup>16</sup> Grudem Pg. 227

One of Jesus' favorite words for God was Father. He referred to God as His own Father<sup>17</sup> and it is apparent as you read the Gospels that the words "God" and "Father" are synonymous to Jesus. The Apostle Peter also understood God as Father for he writes, "...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..." thus calling the "Father" God.

There is much more that can be said, but the teaching of God as Father is particularly a New Testament teaching that became ever clearer as the identity of Jesus became understood. The one God revealed in Scripture is obviously equated with the Father.

### God the Son

Jesus was not referred to as the Son of God in merely a token sense, but He is called "the only begotten from the Father"<sup>18</sup> thus establishing His own uniqueness both in relationship to the Father and to the rest of the human race. In fact, the Jews understood this as making Him equal with God. C.S. Lewis points to the importance of the meaning of this word begotten as a clue to understanding the nature of Jesus, and the nature of the one true God.

To beget is to become the father of: to create is to make. And the difference is this. When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself... Now that is the first thing to get clear. What God begets is God...<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John 5: 17-18, 8:19

<sup>18</sup> John 1:14, 18

<sup>19</sup> C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, (New York, New York: Collier Books, 1952), Pg. 138

This is a point that must not be missed. By the scripture referring to Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, it is giving Him all the attributes of the one true God. He is of the same essence of God. All the attributes of God exist in Him<sup>20</sup>.

A close look at scripture will affirm that Jesus is God. In fact, to deny the deity of Jesus is to deny much of the scripture. The Old Testament prophesied that the coming Messiah would be God (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6). The New Testament affirmed it as well (John 1:1-18). Jesus Himself claimed to be God, both in word and deed (John 8:58, Mark 2:5). Jesus even received the worship of His disciples, an unthinkable response for anyone claiming to know the one true God, unless of course he happened to be that God.

The central teaching of the New Testament, in fact the central theme of all scripture is the truth that God would provide a way for alienated and broken creation to be reconciled to him. Foreshadowed in the Old Testament, revealed in the New, God's provision for this reconciliation was the death of Jesus upon the cross. This is the most powerful evidence of all that Jesus is none other than God. If Christ is not God, then He is a created being and salvation costs God nothing. God would be standing aloof from the plight of His creation and the real hero of salvation would be a created being who paid the ultimate price for the redemption of the world. How could anyone say, "God so loved the World," if He merely spoke a creature into being and sent Him to suffer death at the hands of sinful men. How could any created being outside of God take upon Himself the sins of the world?

The God revealed in the New Testament is not that distant God, but the God who wrapped Himself in human flesh<sup>21</sup> and came Himself to pay the ultimate price for His

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<sup>20</sup> Colossians 2:9

<sup>21</sup> John 1:14

creation. The scripture is clear; there is only one God. Jesus is that God, the one true God. He is not the Father, for He obviously prayed to the Father. He however is God.

### God the Spirit

In the second verse in the book of Genesis, the Spirit of God is introduced. The scripture says, “The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”<sup>22</sup> In modern usage, the word spirit is used in such non-personal ways that it might be easy to consider that this is God’s way of speaking about His power, or working. However, when one moves through the scripture, one is confronted not with a non-personal force but with a person who has all the attributes of God.

Jesus spoke of the Father sending the Spirit as a comforter (helper), a guide, and a teacher<sup>23</sup>. The Father sends the Spirit<sup>24</sup> and Jesus sends the Spirit<sup>25</sup>. The Spirit is addressed as “The Spirit of God,” “The Spirit of the Lord,” “The Spirit of your Father” (Matthew 10:20), “The Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:7), “The Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9), “The Spirit of His Son” (Galatians 4:6), and “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:19).

The Spirit has the attributes of personality as well. He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), quenched (I Thessalonians 5:19), He speaks (Acts 8:29), and He intercedes for the Saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26). It would be

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<sup>22</sup> Genesis 1:2

<sup>23</sup> John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7-8, 13

<sup>24</sup> John 14:26

<sup>25</sup> John 16:7

unthinkable to equate all of these attributes to anyone or anything other than God. The only honest conclusion then is that the Holy Spirit is a person and is truly God.

### The Triune God

In addition to all this, what is one to make of all the Trinitarian passages in the scripture that ascribe the attributes of Deity and divine action to all three persons? New disciples are to be baptized “in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19); believers are “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood” (I Peter: 1:1-2); and believers experience the “grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (II Corinthians 13:14). At the baptism of Jesus<sup>26</sup>, The Father spoke from heaven, the Son was praying in the water, and the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. If God were only one person manifesting Himself in three different modes<sup>27</sup>, this scripture is a deceiving revelation, for three persons are revealed. On the other hand, If the Father were the only God and the Son merely His creation or even a lesser god, then there is more than one God, exactly what the scripture denies.

Dr. Walter Martin, speaking to a theology class,<sup>28</sup> framed the proposition this way. “If it can be shown from scripture that there is only one God, and if it can also be shown that there are three distinct persons who are called God, then the doctrine of the Trinity is the only conclusion.” What else can one say when one approaches the

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<sup>26</sup> Luke 3:21-22

<sup>27</sup> Modalism

<sup>28</sup> Professor Walter Martin, Melodyland School of Theology, 1976

Scriptures and submits to them? The Scriptures reveal that there is only one God. Again and again, God emphatically states that to believe in more than one God is idolatry. He is one, and the only one! Yet, when one searches the Scriptures, three distinct persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) bear the attributes of deity. When one understands any of those three persons as less than deity, one has to distort the Scripture. The obvious implication then is the doctrine of the Trinity.

Walter Martin writes,

...the Trinity is a-logical, or beyond logic. It, therefore, cannot be made subject to human reason or logic. Because of this, opponents of the doctrine argue that the idea of the Trinity must be rejected as untenable. Such thinking however, makes man's corrupted human reason the sole criterion for determining the truth of divine revelation.<sup>29</sup>

Martin goes on to give us a definition in response to the biblical record.

...within the unity of the one Deity there are three separate Persons who are coequal in power, nature, and eternity.<sup>30</sup>

Wayne Grudem agrees and writes that the Bible requires that we affirm three statements. (1) God is three persons. (2) Each person is fully God. (3) There is one God.<sup>31</sup> To deny any of these statements is to deny some aspect of the biblical revelation of God. This is the mystery of the Trinity, the response of the Christian Church to God's revelation.

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<sup>29</sup> Walter Martin, Essential Christianity, (Santa Ana, California: Vision House, 1962) Pg. 21

<sup>30</sup> Martin Pg. 23

<sup>31</sup> Grudem Pg. 231

## Other Considerations

C.S. Lewis asks, “If we cannot imagine a three-personal Being, what is the good of talking about Him?”<sup>32</sup> Is all this really that important? Since it is true that one's view of God will ultimately affect the way one lives, then it is extremely important. Actually, this doctrine is the foundation of Christianity. One cannot make sense of God (as odd as that sounds), creation, salvation, the call to community, prayer, and many other expressions of the Christian faith without it. There are several considerations that Trinitarian Theology alone can make sense of.

First, the nature of God is impossible to explain apart from Trinitarian Theology. The scripture tells us that God is God from all eternity. Before anything, He was there<sup>33</sup>.

Richard of Saint Victor reminds us,

Everything which is or can be either has being from eternity or begins to be in time, and again, everything which is or can be either has being from itself or it has being from something other than itself... it has been established that what holds the highest place in this universe of things cannot receive what it itself is from its inferior. Therefore some substance must exist which both holds the highest place and is from itself.<sup>34</sup>

This means, that in order for God to be God, there had to be a time when He was all there is, otherwise He would not be God.

God is a person, self aware and personal. Yet, if God does not have plurality in His nature, self-awareness would be an impossibility; creation would never have happened.

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<sup>32</sup> C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, Pg. 142

<sup>33</sup> John 1:1-2

<sup>34</sup> Richard of Saint Victor, On the Trinity, Translated by Jonathan Couser, 1999, Pg. 6-9



C.S. Lewis writes,

There is no reason to suppose that self-consciousness, the recognition of a creature by itself as a 'self' can exist except in contrast with an 'other', a something which is not the self. It is against an environment and preferably a social environment, an environment of other selves, that the awareness of Myself stands out. This would raise a difficulty about the consciousness of God if we were mere theists: being Christians, we learn from the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity that something analogous to 'society' exists within the Divine being from all eternity – that God is Love, not merely in the sense of being the Platonic form of love, but because, within Him, the concrete reciprocities of love exist before all worlds and are thence derived to the creatures.<sup>35</sup>

If God exists from eternity as one person, then there was a time when only that person existed. If that is so, there is no reason to expect that He would have been self-aware.

Creation would never have come about, much less the creation of self aware, personal beings.

The Triune nature is indispensable in making sense not only of God but of ourselves as well. J. Scott Horrell writes that the doctrine of the Trinity is today being reaffirmed as having a central importance for our daily lives. The doctrine of the...

Three-in-One provides a macrostructure of reality that makes sense of life, one that gives a remarkable basis for our perception of ourselves as persons, for our relationships in marriage, family, the local church and community and, in point, the role of the local church in mission... In God's own revelation, we encounter a Father, Son and Holy Spirit each loving the other, giving to the other, honoring the other, glorifying the other- this without confusing the high order of the Godhead, the roles that each divine person has fulfilled from eternity past... Christianity affirms that personhood is directly grounded in the three-personed God. It is in God himself that we find a basis for human reason and language, for our capacity to choose, for our profound diversity of emotions, for appreciation of beauty, for our propensity of creativity, for our sense of

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<sup>35</sup> C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain, (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1962), Pg. 29

morality and eternity, for our social nature desiring relationship with others...<sup>36</sup>

Jose Bonino agrees,

The Trinity is not an enigma to be solved but rather the model on which all human relations, including the church should be structured. The Trinity has profound social implications: Neither the all embracing authority of one over others, nor an undifferentiated mass uniformity, nor the self sufficiency of the 'self-made man', but the *perichoresis* of love is our beginning and our destiny-as persons, as church, as society.<sup>37</sup>

Rather than an irrelevant doctrine, which only purpose seems to be to emphasize the otherness of God, Trinitarian theology is incredibly important and practical. C.S.

Lewis writes,

You may ask, "If we cannot imagine a three-personal Being, what is the good of talking about Him?" Well there isn't any good talking about Him. The thing that matters is being actually drawn into the that three-personal life... God is the thing to which He is praying... God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on... God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed... the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on...<sup>38</sup>

### Conclusion

The word mystery is an acceptable characteristic of our description of the Triune God, but that does not mean that the doctrine of the Trinity is not important theology. It was not made up in the heads of the early church fathers but was an honest and inspired

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<sup>36</sup> J Scott Horrell, "The Self Giving Triune God," The Biblical Studies Foundation, <http://www.bible.org/docs/theology/proper/selfgivinggod.htm>, 2003

<sup>37</sup> Jose Miguez Bonino, Faces of Latin American Protestantism, trans. Eugene L. Stockwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), Pg. 113

<sup>38</sup> C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, Pg. 142

response to the revelation of God. Like all of God's revelation, the implications of it continue to grow. None have yet discovered the depths of God or of His plan for humanity. Trinitarian understanding is essential to that understanding. Any other theology is inadequate.

It is true that one who studies the theology of the triune nature of God will have to humbly agree with all Trinitarian theologians, "we must confess that throughout we have been dealing with the realm of mystery." They may all find themselves saying with the Apostle Paul,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

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