

On the other hand, it needs to be said that Kraynak has chosen a legitimate target, and has struck it some worthy blows. For modern liberal democracy is indeed in a dilemma over human dignity. There is no clearer sign of that than here in Canada, where democracy is increasingly in thrall to lobby groups and judicial activists, whose decadent and hollow view of human dignity does not even rise to the level of autonomy of reason and will. Having abandoned any philosophical or theological basis for human dignity, they are reduced to a purely subjectivist notion: the notion that dignity (in Justice Iacobucci's words) "means that an individual or group feels self-respect and self-worth." Against this decline—though curiously he shows no interest in this land of constitutional monarchy north of the border—Kraynak's book protests. The protest, at least from where I sit, is welcome.

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*Trinitarian Theology West and East: Karl Barth, the Cappadocian Fathers, and John Zizioulas.* By Paul M. Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0-19-827032-1. Pp. xiv + 251.

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The subtitle of this book could be slightly misleading if one expects an equal treatment of the trinitarian theologies of Barth, the Cappadocians and Zizioulas; this it is not. Perhaps a better subtitle would have been: "Can Barth's Trinitarian theology be reconciled with Eastern *communio* theologies?" According to Collins, the answer is, "Explicitly, no. But implicitly, yes."

Collins' approach is to examine Barth's trinitarian theology through three correlating concepts: event, revelation and Trinity. According to Collins, the concept of "event" is Barth's attempt to speak of the "how" of revelation, "Trinity" as the concept of God's self-interpretation, and "revelation" as a correlative concept that brings together event and Trinity. But ultimately, Collins' goal is to show how Barth's doctrine of the Trinity might be interpreted as a Westernized version of the communitarian ontology of the Cappadocian fathers in general and the theology of John Zizioulas in particular. Drawing upon a Jüngerian interpretation of Barth which suggests that "God's being in the *Church Dogmatics* is founded on the claim that God's essence is act," Collins attempts to show that the "act of God's being is an event of communion: an event between the divine persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (101).

Central to Collins' assessment is his attention to Barth's preference for the phrase *tropos hyparxeos* over *hypostasis* to designate the "three" of the Trinity. Though both terms were Cappadocian in origin, Barth preferred the former term because he was convinced that it more accurately represented the Cappadocian intent than the latter. This consequently led Barth to use the term *Seinsweise* ("mode of being") in the *Church Dogmatics* in favour of "*Person*" (= *hypostasis*) because Barth assumed that speaking of three *Persons* could

only be understood in modern times as three *personalities* or *subjects*. Collin observes that in this choice, Barth sets himself up paradoxically both to be firmly within and at odds with the Cappadocian tradition (146). However, Collins argues, because of Barth's rejection of *hypostasis* and what appears to be the consequent rejection of the Cappadocian consensus that Barth's trinitarian theology has been more commonly interpreted through a Latin frame of reference. Thus, Collins points out, the general consensus of interpretation on Barth assumes that the model of the Trinity in the *Church Dogmatics* is but another form of the traditional Western version (155).

Collins, however, is not convinced that Barth is rightly understood as being "locked into the influence of Augustine and Hegel" (156). Though Collins specifies that Barth's usages of *tropos hyparxeos* clearly indicate underlying influences of German Idealism, mainly the tendency to speak of God as a single divine Subject (and not three distinct subjects or centres of consciousness), Collins is nevertheless convinced that Barth manages to break free from the "constraints of a static Western ontology" (156). Consequently, Collins concludes that "[Barth's] understanding of the Godhead as a dynamic fellowship of love, rooted in the doctrine of *perichoresis*, is clearly congruent with the Cappadocian tradition" (227). Though Barth does not develop an ontology of the particular *hypostasis* along the same lines as the Cappadocians, he nevertheless "demonstrates the need to establish the real, ontological unity of the three modes of being in the divine fellowship" (226). Most importantly, Collins interprets Barth as reconstructing the conceptuality of ontology such that "Barth understands the divine being-in-act as an event of love, and thus of fellowship (*koinonia*)" (227) along lines similar to that of Zizioulas' proposal as outlined in *Being in Communion*.

Collins is to be lauded for an admirable exercise in contemporary trinitarian and ecumenical theology and as such, his book has much to offer. The correlation of event, Trinity and revelation in the first part of the book provides a helpful conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between the doctrinal form and function in the *Dogmatics*. Furthermore, his discussion of Barth's use of *tropos hypoarxeos/ Seinsweise* in the context of German Idealism gives needed attention to what is so often naively misinterpreted as evidence for a incipient modalism in Barth's doctrine of God.

However, despite its contributions, Collins book is deficient at two levels, one less serious and one significantly more serious. Less seriously, though certainly significant, was stylistic. Unnecessarily redundant passages, the use of opaque forms of expression, and the inclusion of "throw-away" phrases and sentences are evidence that a rigorous editing of the book would have been welcome. Unfortunately, readers will need to exercise a great deal of patient discipline simply to get through certain sections without annoyance.

But more seriously, Collins book carries on the longstanding and now nearly ubiquitous assumption among even the most influential theologians that Eastern and Western trinitarian models are best juxtaposed in contrast to

one another. This approach is a popularization of the de Régnon thesis that “Latin philosophy considers the nature in itself first and proceeds to the agent” while “Greek philosophy considers the agent first and passes through it to find the nature” (117). Unfortunately, if de Régnon’s thesis is accepted uncritically, the contrast between Latin and Greek models of the Trinity becomes a Procrustean bed upon which to interpret specific theologians (e.g., the Cappadocians or Augustine) rather than examining the theology of these thinkers on their own terms. Fortunately, it is an assumption which several scholars (e.g., Michel René Barnes) are beginning to question, especially since de Régnon’s thesis has not been substantiated through careful analysis of Greek and Latin theologians.

Though Collins’ argument remains, in the end, unconvincing to me, his book nevertheless is a valuable study of Barth’s trinitarian theology in its own right and should not be ignored by those engaged in Barth scholarship.

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*Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions.* By Amos Yong. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. ISBN 1-84227-208-4. Pp. 205.

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This book charts a provocative and bold program for a Christian theology of religions. It is mainly a collection of essays that focus on a turn to pneumatology in the discussion of Christianity and its relation to other religions. The author, Amos Yong, is suited to take on such a program. Born in Malaysia into a Pentecostal pastoral family, he was trained in a denominational bible college, a Wesleyan-Holiness seminary, and earned his PhD in religious studies at Boston College. These variegated influences all leave important marks on Yong’s thinking. He is also the author of a related work entitled *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield, 2000).

The thrust of the book is a bracketing of the soteriological question surrounding Christianity and other religions in order to reflect on the distinct economy of the Holy Spirit and what this could mean for a theology of religions. He writes: “...it is precisely because the Spirit is both universal and particular, both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus the Christ, that pneumatology provides the kind of relational framework where in radical alterity—otherness—of the religions can be taken seriously even with the task of Christian theology. The result, perhaps, is the emergence of a new set of categories that may chart the way forward” (21).

The first chapter introduces his ideas within the broader discussion of religious pluralism and states his intended audiences as ecumenical, pentecostal, and evangelical. The next two chapters of the book outline biblical, theological