



COUNCIL FOR  
**RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY**

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October 19, 1992

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TO: Seminar Participants

FROM: George F. McLean, Secretary *George F. McLean*

SUBJECT:

Seminar, "Evangelization and Culture"  
Thursday, Oct. 22, 3:10-5:00 P.M.  
St. Bonaventure Hall, 300, Monroe and Michigan  
Avenues, N.E.

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The fifth session of the seminar will be held on  
Thursday, Oct. 22 as specified above.

In order to introduce the dynamic historical di-  
mension of the issue of evangelization and culture pa-  
pers will be presented by:

John Farrelly, De Sales School of Theology, "Trin-  
ity as Salvific Mystery, and Historical Con-  
sciousness" and

R. J. Gonzalez-Casanovas, Modern Language Dept.,  
CUA, "Cultural Discourse in Hispanic Histori-  
ography on the Reconquest and Conquest: His-  
toricist Hermeneutics from Alfonso X to Las  
Casas".

Your ideas will be greatly appreciated.

Gran invitado para inculcar la fe en la salvación  
en el mundo moderno "orientado al futuro" ! ? y desde el  
futuro (Ecclesiológico)

October, 22, 1992

TRINITY AS SALVIFIC MYSTERY, AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

John Farrelly

(De Sales School of Theology)

Washington, D.C.

The mystery of the Trinity is the central mystery of Christianity, and the way that Christianity is to be lived depends profoundly on the meaning of this mystery. It is the thesis of this present article that our modern historical consciousness calls us to an interpretation of the salvific meaning of this mystery somewhat different from that given by classical theology, because we have a different experience of the world, time and human agency. This somewhat revised interpretation is, we claim, called for by Scripture itself. To present this thesis and some basis for us, we shall (1) present a classical interpretation of the meaning of the Trinity for our Christian lives, (2) recall some changes in sensibility our modern historical consciousness carries with it and some initial implications drawn from this for our understanding of the Trinity, and (3) make a specific proposal concerning a revision of our understanding of the salvific meaning of the Trinity appropriate to these circumstances. We do all this in simply an introductory way.

1. A Classical Interpretation of the Trinity as Salvific Mystery

Perhaps the person most influential in the spirituality of the West has been Augustine, and so we may present his way of relating the

as a classical interpretation of this  
mystery

mystery of the Trinity to our experience of world and time without, however, denying the great differences among spiritualities in the Western Church.

Augustine was a convert to Christianity through the mediation of the Platonists and, in particular, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus and his interpreter Porphyry.<sup>1</sup> Through these Platonists he was able to gain some understanding of the reality of the spiritual or non-material order. Through the preaching of Ambrose in Milan he was able to see that there was some resolution of the tension between the Platonists' understanding of God as spiritual and the anthropomorphisms of Scripture. More than this, he claimed to find the Christian mystery of the Trinity in Plotinus. There he found the Ultimate Principle of reality to ~~be~~<sup>be</sup> the One which by a process of emanations gave rise to all lower beings. The first to emanate from the One was the Nous, or Understanding, and through this there emanated the World Soul. Lesser beings, even matter, emanated in order from these. Plotinus' philosophy was in service of a deeply religious spirit, for it not only showed how lesser reality derived from the One, but how human beings may be fulfilled through a return to the One by a process of turning from what was physical and outside to what is within us, from what is lower in us to what is higher and spiritual within us, and from this to rise toward the One, thus ultimately becoming alone with the Alone. More than once in his life, Plotinus had experienced ecstasy in this return, though the fulfillment of this passage was to be found in the immortal life of the soul after death.

Augustine's understanding of the return of the soul to God is influenced by this scheme to the extent that some scholars have interpreted his conversion as a conversion to Neo-Platonism rather than to Christianity. This is excessive, but it has had enough foundation to give it a semblance of truth for some scholars. We can see something of the way Augustine interpreted the ascent of the soul to God by his reflection on the mystical experience he and his mother had at Ostia shortly before her death. After recounting this experience, he reflected on it:

Rising as our love flamed upward towards that Self-same, we passed in review the various levels of bodily things, up to the heavens themselves, whence sun and moon and stars shine upon this earth. And higher still we soared, thinking in our minds and speaking and marvelling at Your works. And so we came to our own souls, and went beyond them to come at last to that region of richness unending, where You feed Israel forever with the food of truth; and there life is that Wisdom by which all things are made . . . And while we were thus talking of His Wisdom and panting for it, with all the effort of our heart we did for one instant attain to touch it.<sup>2</sup>

Here we have an account of a very personal experience, interpreted in terms of mysticism as basically a way of ascent, passing beyond material things to our own interiority, from our knowledge in the order of sense to our deeper knowledge in the depth of our soul, and hence to God. There are close parallels here with one of the books of



Plotinus' Enneads.<sup>3</sup> This was an experience Augustine ~~experienced~~<sup>had</sup> with his mother, Monica. Thus friendship and communion with other human beings are more important in Augustine's spirituality than they were for Plotinus. This experience is a transitory ~~experience of~~ ecstasy or rapture which is for Augustine a foretaste of the joy of heaven.

We could show that something similar to the above scheme is found in Augustine's interpretation of memory and also <sup>in</sup> his view of time as a process by which we collect ourselves from multiplicity to an inner unity by relating to God, the realm of the immutable.<sup>4</sup> But we restrict ourselves to noting that when Augustine late in life wrote his work De Trinitate, he moved further from Plotinus while still showing his influence. He emphasizes here that the human soul as an image of God as Triune has an inclination to return to God - a return that once more Augustine describes as a a movement from exterior to interior, from lower to higher dimensions of the soul and hence to God. We must be purified to achieve this process, and this purification comes from the Incarnate Word through whom we receive and contemplate Wisdom. "The truths of faith, the truths concerning the Incarnate Word, are the means whereby we pass from the temporal to the eternal".<sup>5</sup>

This was the focus of Augustine's spirituality. We should add that the events of profane history were not of great intrinsic meaning for Augustine. It means little to a Christian what earthly rule he lives under, so long as it preserves a peace that allows the Gospel to

be preached and spread. In De Civitate Dei Augustine recognized certain stages of history but he also emphasized the transcendence of the Christian's destiny over that of an earthly state such as the Roman Empire, showing that it is not the ultimate evil for even such an earthly state to pass away.

We present this as a skeleton example of a classical trinitarian spirituality, while acknowledging that even in the West there were quite diverse spiritualities. Thomas Aquinas, for example, had a different view of human knowledge, ascribed more intrinsic meaning to the political community, and identified the individual more frankly with the body-soul composite than Augustine at times did. But in many ways he was an Augustinian - e.g., in his acceptance of an "exitus - reditus" model of theology (creatures proceeding from God in a gradation of levels of being and returning to him through Jesus Christ as Word Incarnate), and the immutability of God.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Historical Consciousness and Some New Approaches to the Trinity

We would now like to (a) recall very briefly some changes in sensibility and situation in our time that challenge classical Christian spirituality such as that of Augustine, and (b) show some few ways in which a response to this new situation has evoked renewed reflection on the Trinity.

(a) An awareness of the world, time and human agency that we can call historical consciousness challenges in our time a classical Christian spirituality such as that of Augustine. Vatican II noted

something of this change in our culture in its Introduction to the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (Gaudium et Spes):

Today, the human race is passing through a new stage of its history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of man, these changes recoil upon him, his decisions and desires, both individual and collective, and upon his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and people. Hence we can already speak of a true social and cultural transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas in much of classical Christianity, what it meant to be human was tied in with the experience of nature in an agricultural society and with a hierarchically formed social order and geocentric universe, all of this has changed in our time. In the earlier age, the classical experience and understanding of the human greatly influenced the theological interpretation of the human person's return to God. But today men and women experience the context of their existence much more as history than nature, more as human community than interaction with nature, more as determined by their decisions in life than by tradition and the need to accommodate to the cycle of nature, more as determining the future than being determined by the past or present. Men and women of our time consider history and its future very important <sup>and</sup> think that its shape will largely depend upon the <sup>or own</sup> ~~of~~ ~~own~~

decisions and those of the political, economic and cultural institutions of which they are members, experience tensions among individuals and societies that threaten the realization of a future society more in accord with human dignity, and are torn between hope and fear about their future. This sensibility, which is described at times by the phrase 'modern historical consciousness',<sup>8</sup> gives a positive value to secular history and change that is not found in Augustine and other classical spiritualities that were developed in rather hierarchical and traditional societies. For many this is not an optimistic view. In fact, as Pope John Paul wrote in his first encyclical:

The man of today seems ever to be under threat from what he produces, that is to say from the result of the work of his hands and, even more so, of the work of his intellect and the tendencies of his will. . . It is or can be directed against him. This seems to make up the main chapter of the drama of present-day human existence in its broadest and universal dimension. Man therefore lives increasingly in fear.<sup>26 9</sup>

The future seems menacing to many people in our time.

An unrestricted orientation in our technological world that sacrificed the present and human relations provoked its own antibodies that were particularly virulent in North America and Western Europe in the late 1960's and early 1970's but that still have their effects. This was widely called a 'counter culture' and it took many forms. Many people lost confidence in institutions and dropped out of the



~~Revolutions of the 19th century~~

overachieving societies of which they were a part. In a new  
romanticism, many ~~of these~~ <sup>of these</sup> returned to nature and the natural, and  
sought their guidance from their own interiority or the wisdom of  
those who were close to nature, such as the lore of Indian tribes.  
Associated with this was an explosion of interest in the religions of  
the East, and particularly Hinduism and forms of Buddhism. Many cults  
emerged in the United States, some of which were imports from the East  
or hybrids between Western and Eastern religions. Many who remained in  
the mainstream accepted aspects of this counter culture. For example,  
many adopted a more de<sup>u</sup>ttached relationship to the Church, considering  
themselves spiritual but not religious. These tended to find their  
religion more in communing with nature or God on their own; they found  
an identification with a concrete religious institution and community  
to be more a hindrance than a help. We can say that some of these  
found an interiority such as that of classical trinitarian  
spirituality appealing and indeed emphasized it more than Augustine  
and others did.<sup>10</sup> Against such counter-cultural movements, we can  
say that the change in human self-understanding that our modern human  
experience has induced is basically valid, for these experiences show  
us something of what it means to be human. To be human is indeed to be  
involved in history in differing cultures, to shape one's life through  
interacting with the culture and society that are one's environment,  
to restructure oneself progressively as one goes through stages of  
life and as one's environment changes. Many people, however, make a  
total dichotomy between a contemporary understanding of what it means

to be human and a classical view. They have identified being human wholly with a pragmatic, utilitarian or consequentialist search for results in history, and have lost the sense of an intrinsic meaning to human living. Such a shift has in part contributed to the extreme reaction found in the new romanticism of part of the counter-culture. But this is not justified. Human persons engage in their environment and direct themselves to a future with a definite human potential in view of which certain ways of acting enhance their humanity and that of their societies, and others diminish it.<sup>11</sup> Amid the great pluralism of environments and individual potentials, there is also a commonality of human potential that is intrinsically differentiated by sex, age, historical circumstances, etc. And the future that one is oriented to is not only one's own but that of others as well, of our individual human community and the larger human community including even a succession of generations connecting us to the past as well as to the future. We are, as ecological problems are forcing all to recognize now, part of nature as well as historical beings. Neither technocracy nor romanticism is sufficient for our present self-understanding and guidance.

(b) There have been attempts to relate the Trinity as salvific mystery more positively to history in our time than is found in classical theology. For example, the Church at Vatican II acknowledged that there were a number of aspects of traditional Christian spirituality that needed modification in our time because of the changed situation and sensibilities. In fact, the purpose of Vatican

It was pastoral and specifically a certain adaptation of the Church so that its message and life could be communicated in a manner more appropriate to our present culture - an aggiornamento.<sup>12</sup> In reference to the mystery of the Trinity, the Council stressed its salvific meaning rather than the interior relations among the Three Persons of the Trinity. It showed that the origin of the Church is the Father's plan and sending of his Son into the world to redeem it. The Son fulfilled his mission by his preaching of the kingdom, his suffering, death and resurrection. And having ascended to the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit to his community to interiorize what he had done for them, to evoke a missionary spirit in his disciples, and to dwell in his people, leading them to communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit as sons and daughters.<sup>13</sup> Thus the source and goal of the Church and its work is the Trinity. The Church is a sacrament of salvation because it is a sacrament of the Trinity, and it seeks to bring men and women into communion with the Trinity and to a communion with one another modeled on that of the Trinity. Also, the Council's emphasis on charisms of the Holy Spirit given to members of the Church has had a profound effect in the Church. The Church has turned to the mystery of the Trinity for renewal of its life and self-direction in the changing world of today.

There have also been new theological articulations of the Trinity that seek to integrate history more than previously. For example, Karl Rahner reacted against the common Catholic emphasis in theology of the Trinity on the problem of how there could be three persons in one God,

and he emphasized that the mystery of the Trinity is a salvific mystery and should be considered from that perspective.<sup>14</sup> Jürgen Moltmann approached the question of God in his Theology of Hope from the perspective of apocalyptic and later from that of the crucifixion. The question of God is an answer to the problem of evil that we experience, and the Christian answer to this is God's promise of the apocalyptic kingdom that will be given to us through the parousia or second coming of Jesus Christ, and that evokes in Christians today an effort to change the world toward justice. Who God is is tied up with the kingdom; he is the power of the future that comes to us from the future.<sup>15</sup> This book was criticized for downplaying the significance of the present and the past. In a later book, The Crucified God, Moltmann emphasized that God identified himself with human suffering in the cross of Jesus Christ. He articulated the mystery of the Trinity from the perspective of the cross. On the cross the Father in love suffered the deliverance of the Son to death, and the Son experienced abandonment by the Father. It is in virtue of this rupture that the distinction of Father and Son was eternally constituted. And the rupture was overcome by the unifying impact of love that is the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup> Moltmann thus considers that God is Triune in virtue of what happens in history.

### 3. Historical Consciousness and the Salvific Meaning of the Trinity

How can we articulate the salvific meaning of the Trinity in a way that can give more positive importance to history and our



responsibilities for it than Augustine seemed to do? In an answer to this, Scripture is the key, for a theology of the Trinity in our time is wholly dependent upon and secondary to the basis on which the first Christians articulated its beginnings.

The evangelists wrote the gospels from the perspective of the fuller faith they had after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Approaching the synoptics from this perspective, we recall that the center of Jesus' ministry was his proclamation of the kingdom of God and his making this present to the people. That is, he proclaimed and made present to the people God's offer of his definitive and never-to-be-surpassed intervention to save them and give them communion with himself. The beginnings of the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity are found in Jesus' mediation of the kingdom, for it could not be understood without his revealing something of the interrelationship among the Father, Jesus and the Spirit.<sup>17</sup> By Jesus' initiative to preach to the poor and heal the sick, he was showing God's own attitude of mercy and initiative to seek us and save us. By his words and deeds he was revealing that God was love in the sense of having the total initiative in offering salvation out of mercy. To express this he constantly called God Father (e.g. in the parable of prodigal son, Lk 15:11-13). Jesus engaged in his ministry from the secret sustenance of his intimacy with the Father, an intimacy shown in his long periods of prayer and which he expressed by calling God Abba (Mk 14:36) in a way unique to himself and unparalleled in Judaism. He showed that there was a mutuality and

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reciprocity between himself and his Father (Mt 11:25-27) that allowed him to speak so confidently of the Father. - While there is very little that Jesus said of the Spirit in his public life, there was a theme of a dynamis or power coming from Jesus in his exorcisms and healings that, under the influence of later Christian reflection, was ascribed to the Spirit of God (see Lk 11:20; Mt 12:28). He was understood to be a charismatic, one anointed by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit (Lk 2:15, 31, 67). We should add that while the saving intervention Jesus offered was primarily a liberation from the evil of sin and Satan, and a communion with God, it had implications in the political order in reference to the oppression that the Jews experienced under Roman rule. What Jesus offered was the way to peace even in the political order, and a rejection of Jesus' offer of the kingdom was foreseen by Jesus to be a rejection as well of that peace (Lk 19:41-44).<sup>18</sup> One cannot understand Jesus' mediation of the kingdom or salvation without understanding his relationship with the Father and the Spirit. In this sense the mystery of Trinity is a salvific mystery.

Reflections of the first Christians on the post-resurrection experience also show the same reality, though now in a new context.

James Dunn, a highly respected New Testament scholar, writes:

After Jesus' death the earliest Christian community sprang directly from a sequence of epochal experiences of two distinct sorts - experiences in which Jesus appeared to individuals and groups to be recognized as the one who has already experienced

the eschatological resurrection from the dead, and experiences of religious ecstasy and enthusiasm recognized as the manifestation of the eschatological Spirit. . . 19

How is God's salvation mediated by Jesus and the Spirit in the perspective of the early Church? It is through answering this that we understand something of the Trinity as a salvific mystery for us today. What we present here are just a few fragments of this large theme in the New Testament, but fragments honest to its thrust.

"Salvation" in the New Testament is initially a future word, as in fact is "kingdom". In the Our Father, we pray "thy kingdom come" (Lk 11:2). Paul did not use the word "kingdom" much; in speaking to the Gentiles, it was more appropriate to use the word "salvation". This is what God's kingship offered through Jesus Christ. But this salvation is something for which we still hope. Paul writes: "Now that we have been justified by his blood, it is all the more certain that we shall be saved by him from God's wrath" (Rom 5:9). Salvation is an eschatological gift that Jesus gained for us through his death and resurrection and we receive through faith.

To understand this, it is important to recall that the early Christians interpreted the resurrection of Jesus in the context of apocalyptic literature. The apocalyptic understanding of salvation is above all given by the book of Daniel. The author of this book proclaimed God's salvation to people who were being persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes IV for their fidelity to their Jewish religious customs and who experienced their human incapacity to bring about

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their liberation. In a series of visions the author assured them that very soon, in the <sup>cc</sup> age to come <sup>tc</sup> as distinct from the present age dominated by evil, God would take the initiative to save them. In a passage that the New Testament authors found fulfilled in Jesus, Daniel spoke of a vision in which he saw:

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One like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven. When he reached the Ancient One and was presented before him, He received dominion, glory, and kingship; nations and peoples of every language serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not be taken away, his kingship shall not be destroyed (Dan 7:12-14).

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este poder no es aplicable más que a la vida eterna!

This dominion or kingship that the one like a son of man would receive and exercise in an everlasting manner was understood in the early Church to have been given to Jesus and would be exercised by him when he came again at the Parousia. The resurrection of the dead, as well as the kingdom of the son of man, was a part of the promise of apocalyptic literature (Dan 12:1-3). The first ascription to Jesus of a title of divinity was possibly in reference to this Lordship he would exercise when he came again. The early Christian prayer, maranatha!, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20; 1 Cor 16:22) may reflect this.<sup>20</sup> The first use of the word "salvation" in the early Church referred to this mysterious future event that Jesus would bring about.

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It was soon realized, however, that Jesus was already exercising this Lordship, this saving kingship and power. He will not begin to exercise it only when he comes again. Jesus entered into this exercise



of his saving power through being exalted to God's right hand, i.e. through being given a share in his dominion. It is from there that he has sent his Holy Spirit - the eschatological gift (Joel 3:1-5). It is the exalted Jesus who continues to be with his disciples (Mt 28:20). It is he who celebrates the anticipation of his messianic banquet with his followers in the eucharist in which he also sacramentally symbolizes and recalls his suffering and death for us - that great sign of the Father's love for us (Rom 8:32).<sup>21</sup> It is he who sends his disciples on their mission as the Father had sent <sup>him</sup> and works through them, who is the head of the Church and whose body his followers constitute. The point we are making is that the Christ or Son of God who is operating now to save us is Jesus Christ who has gone into the fulness of the future kingdom and from there already acts in this world to exercise the saving power of the age to come through his Spirit and for and on and through his disciples.

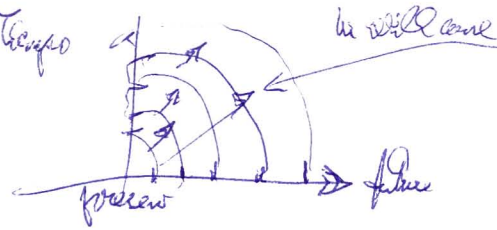
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It is true that in the early Church the moment at which Jesus is declared divine is pushed back further and further - to the resurrection (anticipation of the mystery of the Parousia), to the baptism of Jesus, to his conception, to the first point of creation and to before creation, until we have the latest New Testament Christology in the prologue to John's gospel. But Jesus Christ as he comes to us from the Father now is the one who has gone before us into the fulness of the kingdom and exercises his saving impact upon us from there.

The Spirit he has given us is the power and life of the age to come already operative in this life. The exalted Jesus sent his Spirit

to the community of his disciples (Acts 2) to give them saving power, to transform them interiorly, to move them to proclaim the good news throughout the world (Acts 1:8). This Spirit leads Christians to pray to God as Abba (Rom 8:15) as Jesus did, to live by the Spirit, to be the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16), to confess that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor 12:3), to have and exercise charisms for the upbuilding of the body of Christ, to pray and long for Christ's coming, etc. As St. Paul writes, "We ourselves, although we have the Spirit as first fruits, groan inwardly while we await the redemption of our bodies. In hope we were saved, but hope is not hope if its object is seen" (Rom 8:23-24).

This theme could be developed at much greater length, but the point that I wish to make through this recall of Scripture's teaching is that, counter to the way Augustine envisaged the Son and the Spirit coming to us and evoking our return to the Father, what is central in the New Testament is that the Son and the Spirit come to us from the kingdom or the age to come into which Christ entered and from which, as the fulness and liberation of history, he is already exercising that saving influence that will be apparent when he comes again. In this sense the Spirit and Son come to us from the future. And they evoke our union with the Father not by disengaging us from history but by centering us on where the true liberation and fulfillment of history is found. It is true that the eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us to reveal God. And in this sense the Origin of all the world came to us and calls us to return to the Origin of all.<sup>22</sup> But the point at which Jesus became a "life giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45;

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see also Jn 7:39) was his resurrection and exaltation - his entrance into the world to come. It is from the age to come that Jesus Christ and the Spirit now come to us with their saving influence and mediate our return to God. Thus we go to God not by returning to the beginning of history and the world but by opening ourselves to the fulness of history and the world and to the tasks necessary to proclaim and mediate the kingdom here in history. And as in the case of Jesus himself, this mediation of the kingdom has an answer even to oppressions that people suffer from others in this present world. It has a political dimension.

This renewed biblical understanding that the saving presence of God is mediated to us from the age to come helps us to rearticulate aspects of the Christian message in a way that meets men and women in their self-understanding, without imposing on them dimensions of a classical anthropology that were excessively dependent upon the culture of that time. This helps us to place the challenge of the Christian message in a transcendence that embraces history and its tasks rather than disengages us from it. And it help us to present the Christian message in its relation to what men and women find their greatest anxieties to be. This involves a shift from an earlier theology of the Trinity but not a dismissal of it. That theology has been primarily one that dwelt on the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their eternal relations with one another within the Trinity. What the apocalyptic understanding of the kingdom directly affects is our interpretation of the missions of the Son and the Spirit in the

present order of salvation. Even here, this new context for interpretation of the missions incorporates much that earlier theologians said rather than contradicts it.

For example, we can agree with tradition that the visible mission of the Son or Word took place 2,000 years ago in Jesus of Nazareth, the Word Incarnate, and that he won salvation for us through his life, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection. A visible mission of the Holy Spirit occurred at Pentecost at the beginning of the Church. But that visible mission of the Spirit and the invisible mission of both the Son or Jesus Christ and the Spirit that takes place in the Church and our lives now come to us from the age to come, the fulness of the future kingdom. Christ will save us and fully reveal the Father when he comes again, but he is doing so partially now. He speaks to us now in the Church through recalling what he said and did during his earthly ministry. In our future-oriented world, it is appropriate that we recover the future dimensions of revelation and its present communication to us without losing our faith that God has spoken to us his definitive Word. The invisible mission of the Spirit within our hearts now in time is to lead us to the fulness of history, free us from fixations on the present that block this future from our care, and transform us even here in history so that we seek to instantiate the kingdom within history as we can, even at the cost of the cross.

We may conclude by briefly comparing this view with an aspect of Moltmann's position and of a classical position on the relation of the Trinity to time. While it agrees with Moltmann's position that God

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exercises his saving influence on us from the future and that God by this seeks to lead us not only to self-transformation but transformation of the world, it differs from him in that it does not make the Trinity depend for its constitution on history. And while it agrees with classical theology that the Trinity is eternal and in no way dependent upon history for its existence, it differs from ~~the way~~ ~~the~~ its <sup>s</sup> view <sup>s</sup> of the way the Trinity has a saving influence upon us, because it sees this at present <sup>as</sup> mediated by Jesus Christ exalted at God's right hand and thus coming to us from the age to come or the <sup>l</sup> fulness of the future. A classical theology might say that the Trinity is eternal and relates to all points of time by one divine act and the 'now of eternity' that can touch all points of time in one act. Thus there is no future for God, and he has the same immediacy to each point of time as to every other. But in answer to this, we can say that the Trinity's saving influence is mediated by the man Jesus Christ in his position as Lord of the kingdom to come, and so is mediated to us through the ultimate future of history. One cannot argue directly from characteristics of God's relation to human beings in virtue of creation to such characteristics in virtue of redemption or the kingdom. Nor can one argue directly from the latter to the former.

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the future?

NOTES

1. See Eugene TeSelle, Augustine the Theologian (New York, Herder and Herder, 1970); and Andrew Louth, The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition. From Plato to Denys (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1981) chapter 7, "Augustine", 132-158.  
I wish to note that an earlier draft of the present article appeared in Monastic Studies 17 (1986) 81-100. I thank the editor for permission to use the substance of that article in the present one.
2. Confessions, IX, x, 24 (translated by Frank J. Sheed, New York, 1943).
3. See, for example, Louth, 139; and TeSelle, 43 ff. On Plotinus, see Louth, ch. 3, 36-51.
4. See Louth, 143.
5. Louth, 155.
6. See John H. Wright, S.J., The Order of the Universe in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas (Rome, Gregorian University, 1957).
7. Gaudium et Spes, para. 4, as in Walter Abbott, (ed.), The Documents of Vatican II (New York, American Press, 1966) 202.
8. See John O'Malley, S.J., "Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's Aggiornamento", Theological Studies 32 (1971) 573-601; and O'Malley, "Developments, Reform, and Two Great Re-formations: Toward a Historical Assessment of Vatican II" Theo-

logical Studies 44 (1983) 373-406.

9. Pope John Paul II, Redemptor Hominis (1979), para. 15.
10. For an analysis of this emphasis on individualism and religious interiority in the United States, see Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven Tipton, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985). ✱
11. I have written on this in God's Work in a Changing World (Lanham, Md., University Press of America, 1985) chapter 6, "The Human Good and Moral Choice", 108-160.
12. For an evaluation of Vatican II and the course of aggiornamento in the years that followed the Council, see the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, "The Final Report," Origins 15 (1985-1986) 444-450.
13. See Lumen Gentium, para. 2-4; Ad Gentes, para. 2-4; and Gaudium et Spes, para. 24 and 40. Also see Bertrand de la Margerie, La Trinité Chrétienne dans l'Histoire (Paris, Beauchesne, 1975) 303-319; and Yves Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, vol. 1, The Holy Spirit in the 'Economy' (New York, Seabury, 1983) 77-102.
14. See Karl Rahner, The Trinity (New York, Herder and Herder, 1970).
15. See Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of Christian Eschatology (New York, Harper and Row, 1967).

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17. See F. J. Schierse, "La Révélation de la Trinité dans le Nouveau Testament," in J. Feiner and M. Löhrer (ed.), Mysterium Salutis, vol. 5, Dieu et la Révélation de la Trinité (Paris, Cerf, 1970) 121-144.
18. See God's Work, chapter 1, "The Peace of Christ in the Earthly City", 1-33.
19. James Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1975) 357.
20. See on early Christian apocalyptic, James Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament. An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1977) chapter 13, "Apocalyptic Christianity," 309-340. ?
21. Orthodoxy has kept the eschatological context for the sacraments better than the Western Church. See John Zizioulas, "The Mystery of the Church in Orthodox Tradition," One in Christ 24 (1988) 294-303; and Roman Catholic - Orthodox Dialogue, Valamo, 1988, "The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church," One in Christ 24 (1988) 367-377. I owe these two references to my colleague Barry Strong, O.S.F.S.
22. The tendency in Augustine and other Fathers to concentrate on this aspect of the Trinity's presence to us and restoration of us to the Father, Son and Spirit in a way that lost some eschato-



logical dimensions of the mystery may be due in part to the fact that classical non-Christian peoples considered people's union with the Sacred was through myths and rituals that restored them to the origins of things. Mircea Eliade speaks of the way that initiation rituals in traditional societies "abolish profane, chronological Time and recover the sacred Time of myth," and myths recount what the gods did at the origin of the world. See M. Eliade, Myth and Reality (New York, Harper Torchbook, 1968) 140 and passim. Plotinus' view did not emerge without the influence of religion, and Augustine's view was, as we recalled, influenced by Plotinus.

- No agudo mucho a ~~inculturas~~ se en culturas primitivas o muy antiguas

- Este tipo de ejemplar n/ ~~modelos~~ de futuro no cambia elementos lo tradicional, solo cubre una dimensión que ya existía y no se cuenta ~~para~~ revalorizar el hombre actual (en su poder de cultura "pleno-occidental")