PROTECTION OF AUTHOR’S COPYRIGHT

This copy has been supplied by the Library of the University of Otago on the understanding that the following conditions will be observed:

1. To comply with s56 of the Copyright Act 1994 [NZ], this thesis copy must only be used for the purposes of research or private study.

2. The author's permission must be obtained before any material in the thesis is reproduced, unless such reproduction falls within the fair dealing guidelines of the Copyright Act 1994. Due acknowledgement must be made to the author in any citation.

3. No further copies may be made without the permission of the Librarian of the University of Otago.
A Comparative Assessment of the Concept of Freedom in the Anthropologies of John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth

Marty Folsom

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

October 27th 1994
Abstract


The concern of this thesis is to clarify a proper ontology of free persons. Three contemporary thinkers, John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth, present understandings of the person that are relational in nature and which have been viewed as virtually synonymous with the other two. The central concern of this thesis is to compare and consequently to distinguish these three positions, especially by focusing on fulfilled personhood, which each writer believes to be critically related to freedom. In short, true freedom is actualized in Christ rather than achieved through human effort. Furthermore, while all three scholars propose alternative ontologies to modern individualistic notions of personhood, they do not escape completely the philosophical errors they criticize.

The first chapter contextualizes each of the writers regarding his understanding of the nature of personal existence. Chapters two, three, and four articulate each writer’s anthropology. Chapters five, six, and seven specifically explore the dimension of freedom as fulfilled personhood. It is at this pivotal point in the dialogue that diversity clearly evidences itself. Chapter eight criticizes each anthropology, first separately, and then comparatively, and concludes with a proposed synthesis which extracts from each thinker what I believe to be his most positive contribution to the conception of personhood.

This study affirms the relational ontology of personhood and specifically illustrates that not all relational formulations provide actual human freedom. I conclude that Macmurray, Zizioulas, and Barth each provide helpful insights to free personhood, but that the superior partner in dialogue is clearly Karl Barth, who works from the fulfilled freedom provided by Jesus Christ and, therefore, pursues coherent, scientific theology which is grounded in actuality rather than in speculation.
Preface

New Zealand is a country richly endowed with elements that nourish a conducive environment for this particular study. John Macmurray, a Scotsman, would have felt at home in Dunedin, the Scottish city of the South Island. John Zizioulas, an ecumenical, trinitarian theologian, would find himself happily surrounded by like-minded colleagues. Karl Barth has an enthusiastic, responsive following at Knox Theological Hall—and even has a local mountain named after him: Mt. Barth.

The research for this thesis (1990–1992) progressed under the supervision of Rev. Professor Alan Torrance, Professor of Systematic Theology at Knox Theological Hall, and Dr. Douglas Campbell, Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Otago. I am grateful for their guidance and for the assistance of the staff and librarians at Knox Theological Hall and the University of Otago. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to my fellow postgraduates at Knox; especially Richard Dawson, Bruce Hamill, Andrew Howie, Ian Pimm, Murray Rae, Graeme Sellers, and Robert Thompson, who have contributed to the completion of this work by their keen interest in—and interaction with—the writings of the theologians who form the basis of my dissertation.

My stay in New Zealand was made possible by financial assistance in the form of loans and gifts. I am especially grateful for the continuous generosity of Keith and Cindi Nobriga and for the enthusiastic encouragement of family and friends. My greatest thanks goes to my wife, Tami, whose editing, discussion, and personal support made the completion of this project possible and worthwhile.

As a result of my research in preparation for this thesis, I am convinced that the church needs theological doctors who, by understanding the nature of personhood, can bring the body to the true freedom that is available in Christ. Thus, although this work is delivered to the academic community as a contribution to its theological discussion, it is also intended—at least indirectly—for the church: the voices I hear plead for understandable, healing, coherent theology. In response, this is a proposal for enabling the church to help all persons to live in true freedom.
Contents

Abstract ii
Preface iii
Introduction v
Abbreviations x

1 John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth on the Issues of Anthropology: An Introduction 1
   1.1 Introduction to John Macmurray 1
   1.2 Introduction to John Zizioulas 12
   1.3 Introduction to Karl Barth 18

2 Personal Existence in John Macmurray’s Thought 33
   2.1 The Contexts of Human Personal Existence 34
       2.1.1 Field of the Personal 34
       2.1.2 Religion, God, and Personhood 42
   2.2 Human Personal Existence 62
       2.2.1 The Development of Personhood 63
       2.2.2 The Self as Agent 71
       2.2.3 Heterocentric Existence 88

3 Personal Existence in John Zizioulas’ Thought 93
   3.1 The Shift in Understanding Personal Existence 94
       3.1.1 John Zizioulas in the Context of the Orthodox Tradition 94
       3.1.2 The Neo-Patristic Synthesis 97
       3.1.3 Hypostasis in Ekstasis 101
   3.2 Zizioulas’ Understanding of Personal Existence 104
3.2.1 The Personal Nature of God .................................. 104
3.2.2 The Personal Nature of the Church .......................... 121
3.2.3 The Relational Nature of the Person ....................... 130

4 Personal Existence in the Theology of Karl Barth 141
4.1 Trinitarian Personhood ......................................... 141
4.2 Personal Existence Understood Through Christ .............. 146
4.3 The Spirit and Personhood .................................... 151
4.4 Humanity in Relation ......................................... 155
4.5 The Phenomenon of Human Individuals: Whole Persons .... 160

5 Freedom in the Thought of John Macmurray 167
5.1 The Basis of Freedom .......................................... 167
  5.1.1 Gospel and Freedom ....................................... 167
  5.1.2 Elimination of Obstacles .................................. 168
  5.1.3 Reality and Freedom ....................................... 171
  5.1.4 Social Conditions of Freedom ............................. 177
5.2 Freedom of the Person ......................................... 180
  5.2.1 Action and Freedom ....................................... 180
  5.2.2 The Future and Freedom ................................... 183
  5.2.3 Responsibility and Freedom ................................. 185
5.3 Freedom with Others ........................................... 186
  5.3.1 The Field of Freedom ...................................... 186
  5.3.2 Forms of Freedom .......................................... 187

6 Freedom in the Thought of John Zizioulas 191
6.1 The Basis of Freedom .......................................... 191
  6.1.1 The Freedom of God ....................................... 191
  6.1.2 Theosis ..................................................... 193
  6.1.3 Freedom Through the Church ............................... 193
6.2 Misunderstandings of Freedom ................................ 194
6.3 Truth and Freedom ............................................. 195
6.4 Personal Freedom ............................................... 196

7 Freedom in the Thought of Karl Barth 199
7.1 Trinitarian Freedom ............................................ 199
7.2 Jesus, the Free Person Who Gives Freedom ..................... 202
7.3 The Holy Spirit of Freedom .................................... 206
7.4 The Church: the Community of Freedom ....................... 208
Introduction

Aim

This study is comparative for the purpose of distinguishing a superior methodology in determining what constitutes personhood so as to understand freedom in personhood properly. It is neither a general study of personhood nor an attempt to analyze definitively the broad topic of freedom. It focuses on three contemporary thinkers, John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth, whose relational ontology of personhood has been assumed by some to be compatible (if not synonymous) in the current debate concerning the nature of personhood. This study presents and distinguishes each writer's approach to personhood and critiques those errors or internally incoherent presuppositions which preclude a proper understanding of personhood and, hence, the possibility of true freedom. Each writer believes that in order to understand the nature of freedom, one must properly understand the nature of personhood. Freedom is not a state, concept, or ideal: it is a way of being in relation. All three writers describe freedom as fulfilled personhood. Therefore, this thesis presents their divergent formulations of personhood so as to clarify the uniqueness of their subsequent understandings of freedom.

This study is necessitated by uncritical sloganizing which falsely assumes the synonymity of these writers' depictions of personhood as "being in relation." It articulates their dissimilarities, challenges their presuppositions, and assesses their adequacies and inadequacies for the purpose of culling a theologically scientific anthropology which will facilitate a proper, coherent understanding of freedom. No one of the three is entirely sufficient, but each positively contributes to our understanding of personhood and subsequent freedom. To date, no comparison of this nature exists.

Additionally, this study critiques the individualistic (western) notion of personhood and proposes a constructive alternative. The varied, and often conflicting, concerns of today's global citizens reflect a world very much in need of coherent—indeed true—understandings of personhood and freedom. The current spectrum of
definitions of freedom and personal rights has created a cacophony of discordant, clamoring voices—each demanding attention and, ultimately, confusing the issues of personhood, personal rights, and personal freedom. This thesis proposes that such chaos and confusion have no place in true freedom (fulfilled personhood), nor do rights. The fact is that rights, if they are individually based, inevitably result in a conflict of individual interest and, hence, unfulfilled personhood. If freedom is fulfilled personhood, then that which inhibits its realization necessarily must be excluded from our formulations of freedom. Therefore, in view of the very real chaos and confusion which pervade our world and various societies, the need to understand what constitutes freedom has intensified for east and west, for male and female, for persons of all ages, races, and religions. Our global, mutual needs, therefore, emphasize the significance of the debate to which such a study as this contributes.

Method

Theology is not a neutral academic subject: individual presuppositions brought to the arena inform subsequent studies. This does not imply, however, that theology necessarily excludes scientific methodology. Scientific theology, as outlined by Karl Barth, begins with the givenness of reality. For Barth, this means that one responds to the self-revelation of God in Christ who posits the true ontology of God and humanity. However, theologians need to understand and articulate, to the church community, the actuality of God’s self-revelation. They study that which they do not control; therefore, no theological formulation is final. The church community is summoned to a process of responsible self-examination, questioning whether its language accurately represents God and humanity and facilitates the proper function of the church in God’s service. Thus, the theologian serves God, church, and world, by dispelling illusions so that the relationship already established by God might be realized. This thesis explores the writings of these three thinkers, in particular, to discover whether their work has fulfilled these purposes.

Therefore, this thesis asks, firstly, what Macmurray, Zizioulas, and Barth conceive to be the nature of personhood in preparation for the subsequent question of how they understand freedom as it relates to personhood. According to scripture, Christ has come to set us free. How, then, are we to understand that freedom? Each writer proposes a different anthropology and, hence, a different formulation

---

1John Macmurray’s scientific philosophy is similar.
2“Faith seeking understanding.”
of freedom. By presenting their conceptions of personhood, I can examine their understanding of what it is to be a free person. Finally, I address the internal consistency and presuppositions of each paradigm in order to assess whether or not they satisfactorily represent reality and facilitate freedom.

Structure

This study commences by examining the context in which each of the three writers developed his study. There follows a presentation of what each understands to be the nature of personal existence. Although studies of various aspects of John Macmurray’s thought exist, a study of his concept of personal existence (especially his understanding of the personhood of God) has not been undertaken. To date, no study of John Zizioulas’ understanding of personhood exists; this task, therefore, remains essential. This chapter is comparatively critical in nature because Zizioulas’ presentation of personal existence is less coherent and internally consistent than the others. An overwhelming amount of material on Karl Barth’s anthropology exists (for which I am grateful), but not regarding the specific concern for how personhood relates to freedom. The presentations of personal existence as described by each of the authors in this study are not intended as a defense against critics; rather, they are necessitated by its comparative nature.

The study then illustrates how each of the three thinkers understands freedom

---


4Critiques of John Zizioulas’ work are scarce, but for further exploration of (early) criticisms of Zizioulas, see Ray Anderson, Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God: A Christological Critique (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

5For some helpful studies of Barth’s anthropology, see appropriate sections in Ray Anderson, On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Colin Gunton, The Promise of Triinitarian Theology (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991); Eberhard Jüngel, Theological Essays, trans. by J. B. Webster (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986); Stuart McLean, Humanity in the Thought of Karl Barth (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981); and John Thompson, Christ in Perspective: Christological Perspectives in the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

6Thus, most of the material is gathered from the primary works of the authors and synthesized in order to clarify their positions regarding personal existence and freedom.
as the fulfillment of personal existence. Macmurray perceives freedom as the fulfillment of human capacity to be in relation with others. As such, it is facilitated by a prior anthropological possibility intended to be fulfilled in the future and is a form of idealistic freedom, despite Macmurray's desire to be a realist. Zizioulas understands freedom to be enabled by an ecclesial capacity which is fulfilled in the act of bringing persons to participate in the eschaton. His is also an idealistic conception because of the a priori possibility of human freedom realized through the church. Both Zizioulas and Macmurray color their canvas of freedom with conditionality (fulfilled human or ecclesial capacities) and speculation. Barth's understanding of freedom is uniquely based upon actualities: the already fulfilled freedom offered to us in the person of Christ, who has gifted us with personhood and freedom. Thus, Barth succeeds in remaining a realist who provides a concrete formulation of human freedom which can be scientifically studied. Although all three are committed to the idea of free persons, I shall argue that Barth alone offers a theologically coherent understanding of true (actual) freedom.

Finally, this study briefly summarizes each position and follows with a detailed comparison and critique, in which their cumulative contributions are synthesized, proposing a helpful way forward in establishing a coherent anthropology of free personal existence.

Considerations

Throughout this work, North American rules of spelling and punctuation are followed with permission of the Faculty of Theology, University of Otago.

These are unique with reference to Macmurray and Zizioulas, whose understandings of freedom have not been studied. There are, however, a few helpful studies on this aspect of Barth's thought. See Colin Gunton, "The Triune God and the Freedom of the Creature," in Karl Barth Centenary Essays, ed. by S. W. Sykes (Cambridge: The University Press, 1989), pp. 46–68; George Hendry, "Freedom of God in the Theology of Karl Barth," SJT 31 (1978), pp. 229–44; and Robert Osborn, Freedom in Modern Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), especially chapter four, "Karl Barth: Freedom in Christ," pp. 116–79. Thus the subtitle appropriately given to the book by Clifford Green, "Theologian of Freedom." Barth himself said in 1963, in the introduction to Evangelical Theology, that what we need is a "theology of freedom" (p. xi). In fact, Barth's biographer, Eberhard Busch, records Barth's conclusion that, "if he were an American theologian he would try to write a theology of freedom" (p. 459). This thesis affirms with Barth that such a theology is needed and acknowledges that he has made significant contributions to this end.

My primary references are William Strunk, Jr. and E. B White, Elements of Style, third ed. (New York: Macmillian, 1979), and Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G & C Merriam Co., 1981).
Inclusive language is employed wherever possible; however, quotations follow their original construction. Male pronouns used of deity and humanity in these occurrences are understood as non-exclusive by original intention.

In John Macmurray's work, the term Other (capitalized) refers to whole personal other, and other (uncapitalized) refers to another individual.

John Zizioulas capitalizes the term Eucharist because he endows it with a unique, foundational nature as the one prior act to all other sacraments—a mystical participation with God whereby one transcends temporality and shares in the eschaton. In respect for his emphasis, I have retained the capital.

\[10\] Thus includes God, society, and other persons.
## Abbreviations

### Works of Karl Barth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Against the Stream: Shorter Post-war Writings, 1946-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Church Dogmatics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>The Christian Life: Church Dogmatics 4 A, Lecture Fragments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIO</td>
<td>Dogmatics in Outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Evangelical Theology: An Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Final Testimonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOG</td>
<td>The Humanity of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTNC</td>
<td>Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Theology and Church: Shorter writings 1920-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Karl Barth's Table Talk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Works of John Macmurray

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A:'BK'</td>
<td>Adventure: The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith, “Beyond Knowledge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>The Boundaries of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>A Challenge to the Churches: Religion and Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>The Clue to History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'C-PS?'</td>
<td>“Christianity—Pagan or Scientific?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Creative Society: A Study of the Relation of Christianity to Communism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Christianity and the Social Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMW</td>
<td>Freedom in the Modern World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'FPN'</td>
<td>“Freedom in the Personal Nexus”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IU</td>
<td>Interpreting the Universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMS</td>
<td>Some Makers of the Modern Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>The Philosophy of Communism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Persons in Relation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAS</td>
<td>Religion, Art and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Reason and Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>The Self as Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRE</td>
<td>The Structure of Religious Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRR</td>
<td>Search for Reality in Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works of John Zizioulas

BAC Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church
'BCE' "Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist"
'ECC' "The Early Christian Church"
'ENV' "Ecumenism and the Need for Vision"
'HCHI' "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood"
'MOC' "The Mystery of the Church in the Orthodox Tradition"
'OC' "Ordination and Communion"
'PDC' "Pneumatological Dimension of the Church"
'PGC' "Preserving God's Creation (3 parts)"
'T2EC' "The Teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective"

Other Works Frequently Cited

BCC1 The Forgotten Trinity: 1 The Report of the BCC Study Commission on Trinitarian Doctrine Today
BF Anderson, On Being a Family
BH Anderson, On Being Human
HT Anderson, Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God
SJT Scottish Journal of Theology
1

John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth on the Issues of Anthropology: An Introduction

John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth regard freedom as an issue that must be addressed within the context of personhood because they believe it is a particular aspect of personhood rather than an abstract concept. This section introduces the general theological or philosophical perspective of each, along with his attendant diagnoses of the difficulties of defining personhood in preparation for a comparison of the three anthropologies. Each had a particular concern which caused him to ask what is meant by the term "person." Describing the context in which each addressed the question, this study clarifies the specific epistemology of each with regard to personhood.

1.1 Introduction to John Macmurray

John Macmurray was born in 1891 into a conservative, Calvinist family. During his university years, he challenged dogmatic approaches to religion and adopted a scientific attitude toward the subject. Believing that all propositions of religion should be questioned and modified continually, he regarded the goal of religion to be the facilitation of fulfilled human relations. His experiences in World War I

---

disillusioned him with respect to religion and the idealism of the British culture. He believed that religion had failed in its task and, furthermore, that much of western philosophy was shaped by false religious sentiments rather than by reality. He concluded that the prevalent optimism regarding human potential was blind to its failures in the forms of war and human destruction. Consequently, he dedicated himself “to the elimination of war from human life.”

He began by analyzing western civilization in order to diagnose its undergirding problems of alienation and individualization.

Macmurray believed philosophy’s task was to examine the presuppositions and prejudices which humans uncritically propound in their world views. Additionally, he believed that philosophy should reflect upon human experience and facilitate participation in the concrete world. Especially important in this task was the question, “How can we be free?” Convinced that proper philosophical knowledge facilitated fulfilled relations and cultivated freedom, Macmurray believed that persons lack freedom because they lack a proper understanding of personhood. On behalf of civilization, therefore, a philosopher must not be confined only to formulations of abstract truth, but must be concerned to nurture fulfilled personhood.

Theory must be for the sake of practice.

One begins by acknowledging that knowledge of the world and others comes through personal, active relationships. The discipline of philosophy articulates this immediate experience in logical terminology, reflecting that which has been experienced in conscious action for the purpose of clarifying systems which, in turn, encourage fulfilled personal relations. Thus, Macmurray asserted, thought

---

3SRR, p. 22. Thus, I disagree with Duncan, On the Nature of Persons, p.57, when he says that Macmurray “does not offer his philosophy as a therapeutic agent.”


5John Macmurray, Interpreting the Universe (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), pp. 10–11. Hereafter IU.

6John Macmurray, Freedom in the Modern World (London: Faber and Faber, 1941. Originally published 1941), pp. 111–14. Hereafter FMW. Macmurray discusses two kinds of philosophies: one symbolized by an old man reflecting on life, asking “What is real?” in order to reflect on reality accurately. The other, with whom Macmurray identifies, is portrayed by a young man looking ahead, seeking to contribute to life in a practical, free manner and asking “How can we be free?” Macmurray discarded theoretical philosophy in favor of pragmatic philosophy.

7John Macmurray, The Self as Agent (being the Gifford Lecture, 1953) (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 15. Hereafter SA. He states, “All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action is for the sake of friendship.” Friendship is that relationship characterized by personal freedom. Hence, we understand ourselves and the world so that we can live in a free existence with one another and the world.
results from action. The key to his epistemological system can be summarized in the axiom: Personal knowledge of the world precedes reflective knowledge, which should be formulated only to facilitate further action in the world. If thought is neither based on nor fulfilling this purpose, it is idealistically unreal and frustrates, rather than facilitates, friendship. Therefore, Macmurray opposed idealism and critiqued systems which claimed to reflect reality but did not participate in it. He sought to ascertain whether their formulations, hypotheses, or creeds reflected reality and furthered human relations, or whether they were speculative and frustrated human relations.

Analyzing modern society, Macmurray identified two modern crises—the apotheosis of the state and the decline of religion—which hinder proper understandings of personhood. When individuals function as units who are controlled and unified by government (communism), the state has been elevated inappropriately and vice versa, when the individual is elevated, society fragments and atomizes (capitalism). Priority on the all-powerful state neglects persons, and both forms of society conceive of persons as isolated units.

In both instances, the state replaces religion—which has neglected its role of unifying humanity, as Macmurray believed it should. Religion declines when it abandons its primary function and because the task of religion remains unfulfilled, the state acts as an (inadequate) surrogate. According to Macmurray, proper society depends upon religion to fulfill this role of facilitating relationships, interdependence, and free community based on love.

He believed these two crises arose from the fundamental problem of an inadequate understanding of personhood. The myth of individuality, inherited from past cultures, results only in chaos and Macmurray's first task as a philosopher was to critique the fallacious, fracturing individualism of the past and secondly, to propose a model of personhood that reflected reality and enabled worldwide peace and unity. In this pursuit, he suggested that religion was the original aspect of personal being which, as a divinely bestowed capacity, enabled humanity to relate to God and itself in a fulfilled manner such that humanity cooperated with God's

8 IU, p. 15.
9 This is my formulation.
10 Macmurray focused on the disciplines of science, religion, art, psychology, and politics because he believed each to be particularly susceptible to dualism and idealism and, hence, to improperly formulated systems and subsequent unfreedom.
11 SA, pp. 29–30.
12 See the discussion on Macmurray's categorization of societal types in Frank G. Kirkpatrick, "Toward a Metaphysic of Community," in SJT 38 (1985): 568.
intention.\textsuperscript{13}

It is this study's contention that this proposal defines Macmurray first as a theologian and secondarily as a philosopher (\textit{contra} his claim otherwise). His was essentially a theological base (interpreting the intention of God), but he (accurately) recognized that many of his presuppositions sprang from psychology and other branches of science.

In pursuit of his primary task of understanding personhood, he critiqued western civilization, and commenced with an evaluation of three ancient cultures whoseapperception of the world profoundly affected western thought: Hebrew, Greek, and Roman.\textsuperscript{14}

The Hebrew culture, religious in nature, regarded the world as the field of God's activity.\textsuperscript{15} Because the Hebrews believed that God was known through action in the human sphere, they avoided idealism. Their realism derived from a focus on God as the creator and maintainer of the unified, whole, world and as a result, they also avoided dualism.\textsuperscript{16}

Because it avoided both dualism and idealism, Macmurray found much to admire in the Hebrew religion. Consequently, he approved of Christianity (because of its Hebrew heritage) and believed it to be the best modern religion, in which Jesus continued the Hebrew prophetic tradition, by operating in a fully personal manner to effect personal relationships,\textsuperscript{17} however, its high status in Macmurray's mind was largely due to its emphasis on the necessity of community based on love of God and neighbor. Despite its rich heritage, Christianity was compromised by the dualistic separation of church and state in the Middle Ages and subsequently, by rationalism in the modern world. Macmurray believed modern Christianity desperately needed to be restored to its Jewish roots so as to fulfill God's intention of the restored community of humanity.

The Greek culture, artistic in nature, was based on a creative, reflective apperception of the world. Its aesthetic concerns motivated a focus on the abstract, ideal form of reality. Greek thinkers believed this world merely shadowed the ideal

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{SRR}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{CH}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{CH}, pp. 31–32. While the priests and the kings potentially could introduce dualism by dividing between the classes, the prophetic element disallowed this occurrence by their response to the personal encounter of God—contrary to the priests and kings, who lived by laws and systems. See also \textit{FMW}, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{FMW}, p. 81; \textit{RE}, pp. 240–42; \textit{CH}, p. 2.
realm and that reality was depicted through the images of the artistic mind. Such idealism fostered inadequacy in pragmatic issues. Whereas they excelled in the arts, their politics and organizational skills were primitive. Thoroughly saturated by their culture, their philosophers failed to escape the idealism that marked the contemplative consciousness of the Greek society. They proposed ideal systems that encouraged hope for fulfillment in another world instead of motivating active pursuit of fulfillment in this world. The creativity of Greek apprehension was revived in the Renaissance and Romantic periods when the arts were appreciated once again. While creativity and the aesthetic appreciation of the world are valuable, the Greek mentality was flawed inherently in that it separated the ideal from the material world and conceived of persons as distinct, contemplative units rather than as beings who are dynamically involved with others. Hence, Macmurray contended, Greek consciousness engaged in unreal thought and neglected knowledge based on engagement with the world.

He believed that the Greeks bequeathed this emphasis on theoretical formulations to all modern theology, especially that of the Eastern Orthodox church, which focused on the mystical aspects of Christianity to the neglect of the practical concerns of this world. He asserted that such a focus served as an escape mechanism instead of facilitating true human community and although its concern to formulate right ideas about God successfully guarded it against heresy, its Greek inheritance of idealism unfortunately separated the spiritual realm from the material realm, theology from practice.

In contrast, the Roman culture was pragmatic. Its outstanding organizational aptitude provided effective structures for efficient administration of the state, the delineation of moral values, and the maintenance of a powerful military presence across the known world. Its emphasis on efficiency motivated this culture to suppress emotion and to focus on self-control and compliance with the authority of the state. A person was defined as a citizen of the state. The concern of the ideal citizen was to obey its laws, succeed in business, and possess wealth. Personal

---

19 CH, pp. 22–23.
20 CH, p. 70.
21 FMW, p. 83.
23 CH, pp. 131–32.
24 CH, pp. 152–54.
25 FMW, p. 75; CH, pp. 20–21.
26 FMW, p. 77.
freedom was the successful realization of these concerns: the free person belonged to the state and could rise willfully in its structure.

This emphasis on willful compliance to an authoritative system permeated the Roman Catholic church, according to Macmurray, and modern Christian morality reflected the Roman emphasis on suppression of emotion and conformity. The only change was that the will of the church (Catholic and Protestant) replaced that of the state. The emphasis on pragmatic concerns fostered an association of the spiritual realm with unreality. The church's obsession with controlled behavior resulted in codified doctrines and threats of punishment for disobedience, in this life and in the hereafter. Thus, Macmurray believed that the modern western world was "Roman at heart" in its suppression of (emotionally based) art and religion.

He depicted Mediaeval society as the historical converging point of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman thought forms, though the Roman church dominated all areas of life. In its will to assert power, the church abandoned its nature as true Christianity and the human masters of the church quenched the creative aspects of life. Fortunately, monasteries provided a context for the religious spirit to express itself, and Macmurray attributes the birth of the modern world to these havens.

Three monks, in particular, profoundly influenced the modern world: St. Francis, who was the symbol of universal brotherhood and the forerunner of the Renaissance and Romantic movements; Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation; and Thomas Aquinas, whose systematic logic provided the framework for the development of the modern intellect.

It was the advent of the emotionally motivated Renaissance and Reformation that motivated the modern world's revolt against the control of the Roman church and brought a resurgence of creativity in the realms of art and religion. Unfortunately, both movements elevated the individual, thereby initiating a descent into humanism. In this context, individuals challenged traditional philosophies and ushered in an era of rationalism in which God was viewed as an obsolete idea.

During the Reformation, authority shifted from the church to the individual.
Seizing the right to interpret the Bible for themselves, individuals dispensed with church authority and, in its place, relied solely on their own judgement. Forced to relinquish its control, religious authority yielded to that of science, which appealed to reason rather than to emotion (as religion had done). Humanism was characterized by a central focus on the individual, in which the human mind replaced God’s centrality and relegated religion to the realm of myth. Based on rationality and self-control, individualism distinguished western Christianity from eastern Christianity.

In the cultural shift to the supremacy of the individual, the Romantics based their philosophical systems on an evolutionary understanding of reality. Biology, politics, social life, philosophy, science, religion, and economics all bore the stamp of “natural progression” (development to higher levels). Each discipline’s questions pertained to evolutionary development and destiny. Humans, observing natural progression, needed no prime mover and, consequently, ceased to perceive God as the explanation for these mysteries. Each person claimed the right to think and act as desired, furthering an individualistic understanding of personhood and the idealistic illusion that human capacities (without God) were unlimited.

World War I shattered this naïve optimism of Romanticism. In its aftermath, it established a new, narrower context for humanity’s advancement: science. Although Macmurray applauded the scientific method, he believed that modern science neglected to engage itself in serious self-criticism. Its genesis in Cartesian thought fostered individualistic presuppositions which have remained unchallenged. Descartes perceived the self as separate from the world of action it studied and left a legacy of improper understandings of self and its dynamic involvement with the world.

Macmurray asserted that science, if it is to proceed coherently, must recognize the integration of self and the world it observes. He believed scientists should operate as the monks of the modern world and lead persons to new insights regarding their involvement in the world and with one another. However, because science has not carefully evaluated personhood and its effect on human knowledge of the world, it persists in a dualistic division between knower and known and suggests that knowledge exists independently within the limits of pure reason, rather than finding its source in immediate experience.

both as proclamations which emphasize the individual.

33 FMW, pp. 90-91.
34 CH, p. 190.
35 It is evident here that Macmurray stands in the tradition of what Michael Polanyi calls post-critical philosophy. Polanyi gave the 1951-52 Gifford lectures in Aberdeen which formed the basis of his book, Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy (Chicago: University of Chicago
Against the background of developing cultures, Macmurray diagnosed a number of problems that have developed in modern philosophy. In particular, he criticized modern systems which have misunderstood the person and, hence, misrepresented reality. He specifically targeted idealism and dualism, which separated the self from a world which was itself divided into two spheres: the material and the rational.

Idealism conceives of the mind as the only true reality, and the material world as merely a means to that end. It attempts to escape the struggles of life by identifying with a better, or future, realm. In so doing it neglects the concerns of this present world and adopts an illusory, mystical concept of reality. For the idealist, ideas are primary and the material world is secondary; practice is subordinate to theory.

According to Macmurray, idealism assumes its clearest form in religion. There, the distinction between believing in God or in the idea of God is the difference between realism and idealism. The Roman empire's acceptance of the church imported Greek philosophy and idealism and delegated responsibility for spiritual matters to the church while controlling practical state matters. Thus divided, the worlds of church and state developed separately, and the church became an idealistic, theoretical institution whose theology spoke of God while neglecting humanity's concerns. It promised a community of equal persons while simultaneously distinguishing between rich and poor, male and female, young and old (distinctions still evident today). Its ideals failed to shape its actions and it deteriorated into a pseudo-religion that frustrated relationships. Thus, Macmurray proposed, concern for personhood compels a rejection of idealism because it ignores the

Press, 1958). Macmurray gave the 1953-54 Gifford lectures in Aberdeen and shows a great similarity of thought, though uniquely applied. Both reject the scientific method, which separates the knower from that which is known. Polanyi is particularly concerned with epistemology, hoping to correct the scientific method by showing the significance of our personal knowing in the establishment of "scientific knowledge." Polanyi touches on issues of personhood, but largely provides a methodology for discussion. Macmurray's specific contribution to post-critical philosophy lies in articulating the inadequacy of the critical method, which abstracts a picture of personhood established in the reasoning capacities of humans, and points the way to a more adequate ontology of personhood where personhood is established and known in the world of personal relations.

PR, pp. 140-41. All of nature, in continual progress, is in conflict as a means to the ideal ("real") state.


problems of personhood.\textsuperscript{39}

He believed that Marx correctly identified the problem of idealism in religion: in most cases, religion's promises of a better life deadened one's senses to the pain and injustice of this world. However, Marx did not escape his own charge of idealism: he also promised a better life in the future if people would pursue the communist ideal and in so doing, inspired hope based on an ideal that might never be fulfilled in this life.\textsuperscript{40}

The modern crisis in religion \textit{and} in communism is that of idealism. Though religion's promise of a better life in another sphere \textit{are} idealistic, communism echoes the error in its promises of a better life in the future. Macmurray contended that communism and Christianity, by relinquishing idealism, potentially could merge and mutually fulfill the personhood of all humankind.\textsuperscript{41}

Likewise, Macmurray scathingly condemned dualism because it divides reality into distinct spheres. Whereas idealism maintains the whole separate reality of the thought world, dualism simply fails to find a unity of the real.\textsuperscript{42} In the distinction between mind and matter, the mind is the locus of truth and the philosopher understands the material world derivatively. Consequently, there is always a fundamental division between the knower and the known.

However, Macmurray believed that these are merely two modes of perception; that the division is not in reality, but in perception. In fact, one first perceives the world through the senses and subsequently reflects in the mind. In this formulation, reflection is not a separate reality: it is derivative of experienced reality.\textsuperscript{43} The one world is known through personal action and then through mental reflection upon that action.

Although dualism has influenced philosophy since early history (\textit{i.e.}, Aristotle and Plato),\textsuperscript{44} its most profound impact was introduced into western thought by René Descartes (1696–1650). He viewed the world as basically substantial, but believed it must be represented in logical terminology.\textsuperscript{45} True knowledge depended on rational formulations and categories of the mind. The Cartesian formulation of knowledge began in the individual mind, \textit{contra} Macmurray's paradigm wherein reflection is an action-based perception of the world.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{40}\textit{CS}, p. 94. We will see later that, ironically, even Macmurray does not escape this criticism.
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{CS}, p. 57. But is this not an idealistic hope displaying Macmurray's own idealism?
\textsuperscript{42}\textit{SA}, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{PR}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{45}\textit{SA}, pp. 32–34.
\end{flushright}
According to Macmurray, Descartes' starting point was chosen illogically in that it was merely a challenge to the authority of the church, a declaration of independence. 46 The institution of the church had stifled the acquisition of knowledge for centuries, 47 and Descartes believed that he had the right—indeed, duty—to think for himself and to accept no other authority than his own reason. However, by beginning with the systematic doubt of other external authorities, he failed to recognize that one can only doubt if one first believes. If someone believes something and has no reason to doubt it, choosing to doubt is irrational. 48

Although Cartesian method attempted to attain certifiable knowledge, its genesis was in the individual (separate from the world) and consequently, it could not know the world accurately. Furthermore, it could not properly understand personhood because it defined persons as thinking entities, separate from the world, who projected from the mind onto reality. From such a vantage point, Macmurray concluded, Cartesian notions of reality and of personhood merely circumvented the actual revelation of reality.

Immanuel Kant, whose contributions to modern conceptions of personhood are not insignificant, also failed to escape dualism. He sought to distinguish objective reality (scientific and moral) from subjective reality (aesthetic judgments) 49 and proposed that objective reality was based on a system of laws, which provided the basis for rational knowledge. The determined world could then be scientifically studied as the phenomenal world (the world as it appears to us). Correspondingly, he believed the subjective world to be indeterminate, thus allowing for freedom of action. In the noumenal sphere, one must be able to will an action, that is, to determine the indeterminate. In his paradigm, the determined was fit for scientific study whereas the undetermined was fit for free activity. Hence, the antinomy of freedom: the world is free and yet not free.

Again, Macmurray contended that these two worlds are non-existent: the one person acts in the determined world. Through interaction with the determined world, one fulfills intentions by practical involvement with material reality. Rationality about the world is based on sensibility in the world, and, therefore, Kant

46 SA, p. 33.
47 SA, pp. 75-76. See also CH, p. 183, “The philosophy of Descartes rests upon the assertion of individual freedom in the field of reflection.”
48 SA, p. 77. According to Macmurray, “It cannot be true that I ought to doubt what I in fact believe, by a deliberate act of the will. For this is an impossibility, and 'ought' implies 'can.' If then I am asked to accept this method of systematic doubt, I am invited, as a matter of principle, to doubt what I in fact believe. What then shall I gain by this game of make-believe?”
49 SA, pp. 63-64.
should have placed his critique of practical reason before his critique of pure reason. Kantian method’s inversion created a rationally-oriented dualism which was unnecessary. Furthermore, his system was inconsistent with human experience, which first knows the world in action and then reflects upon it.

Because Kant defined the world and persons as objects for the knower, he disallowed personal knowledge of others. Moreover, because God was not empirically known (as object), God was relegated to the world of ideas and the individual knower egocentrically related to others as objects and to God as an idea. Such methodology ignored the personal nature of knowledge in the unified world and therefore could not reflect reality. It’s logical conclusions sprang from a fallacious (theoretical) origin rather than from the real world of human experience.

Both Descartes and Kant emphasized the isolated, individual mind and thus thought, rather than action, defined personal existence. Individual, subjective Personal logic eliminated contradictions and each person assumed that all other persons shared synonymous conclusions regarding the nature of reality. The assumption that humanity is constituted by individuals who share a common perception of truth is sleight of hand, according to Macmurray, who declared that we fool ourselves by believing that the mind is the seat of reality and the world of our experience is merely secondary. This is merely an escape from reality into the heaven of our minds, where “error and evil cease to trouble us and the clash of our mutual contradictions is stilled and the struggle of our antagonistic purposes resolved.”50 Individuals who are isolated in their mind-world do not really engage with others or the external world. Such philosophical dualism defines other persons and the world as objects and ignores the fact that knowledge is a personal activity acquired by sharing in the world. If it is to be real, then, knowledge must be based on a shared life of activity and communication. Knowledge presupposes engagement.

Seeking to reflect reality, Macmurray’s philosophical system emphasized the primacy of action and assumed that a real world existed which could be known through personal experience and subsequent reflection upon these experiences. He believed that it was at the point of practical engagement with the world that knowledge was acquired. He distinguished knowledge of objects and organisms from that of persons because the former is impersonal (derives from event) and the latter is personal (dependent on intentioned act). Knowledge of persons and God is possible only because their intention is revealed in their acts and self-expression.

Because of the intentional nature of personal knowledge, Macmurray believed persons require an epistemology that differs from that of objects and organisms. Hence, he sought to formulate a new paradigm for personal ontology, which he

50PR, p. 20.
believed to be the pivotal point of facilitating relationships (his primary goal).

1.2 Introduction to John Zizioulas

John Zizioulas, an Orthodox theologian, desires to resolve the split between east and west. He proposes to do this by a return to the discussions of the early ecumenical councils and re-grounding the church on a foundation which is in continuity with that of the ancient ecumenical church. Despite his emphasis of the fact that unity depends upon more than proper confessions and creeds, the majority of his published works feature Orthodox formulations. He cites the need to challenge the theological presuppositions of all traditions, but primarily finds fault with the west and overlooks several errors in eastern traditions.

His means of reconciling the east and west is through a proper articulation of personhood, which he believes has been fundamentally misunderstood (particularly in the west) and, therefore, has caused alienation. He believes, in accordance with the advice of the councils, that only if human personhood is derived from divine personhood, and divine personhood is itself correctly understood, can any resolution—or indeed any truth—be attained in these crucial questions.

He believes that disunity has been furthered by differing formulations of Christology and pneumatology and argues that the western concern with epistemology results in a Christological bias and an imbalanced focus on God’s acts in history. His solution is to advocate a pneumatologically-conditioned Christology. While Zizioulas’ criticism of a Christological bias may be valid, his alternative preference for eucharistic concerns and pneumatological bias raises the suspicion that balance has not, in fact, been achieved.

Regardless of the finer points of balance, the crucial need is to understand personhood properly and it is Zizioulas’ contention that humans cannot define personhood accurately because of the effects of the Fall. Observing humanity

---


52 These issues will be addressed at greater length in the discussion of Zizioulas’ understanding of personhood. See chapter three, *Personal Existence in John Zizioulas’ Thought.*

53 'T2EC,' p. 52.

54 His formulations, however, tend to obscure the historical Christ and to focus on the Spirit’s role of bringing the contemporary body of Christ to share in the *eschaton.*

55 If what can be known about God intellectually is given priority over a knowing communion, then reason has priority over emotion and action in the world. Such is the hallmark of western thought since Descartes, as Macmurray has shown.
in its present form, he believes that one can only wonder what an “un-fallen” human might be like. The ontology of fallen persons is subjective, based on variously interpreted empirical data and human capacities—to know, to love, to act, and so forth. These suggestions have no specific access to truth and, hence, no authoritative pronouncement as to the nature of personhood. Zizioulas asserts that such speculative cultural definitions of personhood have permeated theology since ancient times and he especially notes the Hebrew, Greek and Roman cultures, as did Macmurray. Whether based on empiricism or introspection, their various definitions operated within an anthropocentric framework whose presuppositions were neither scientific nor theological, but were cultural conjectures, based on opinion rather than actuality.56

Hebrew culture, according to Zizioulas, overemphasized the historical nature of personhood. In their focus on the historical (and future) acts of God, the Hebrews neglected the natural world and de-emphasized human personhood. Rather than regarding God’s being as communion, the Hebrews conceived of God’s being in intervention. Furthermore, they defined persons by acts of obedient response to the revealed will of God.57 Zizioulas believes that such is an incomplete ontology of personhood because it is primarily phenomenological in nature.58

Greek culture was concerned about the nature or essence of things. By observing and understanding the world, they believed they could comprehend the

58 John Zizioulas, Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), p. 45, footnote 40. Hereafter ‘BAC.’ Note especially the end of this extensive footnote where Zizioulas asserts that the ontology of God cannot be known through the economy of God. Here he specifically confronts Barth’s theology for finding its basis in the “economy” of God’s revelation, the phenomenon of God, and further down strongly denies any “parallel co-existence of the three persons, a kind of multiple manifestation of the being of God.” He is clearly attempting to avoid ontological statements about the personhood of God based on the phenomenon of God. If by this he meant to avoid natural theology, where statements are made by projecting onto God, he should not have used Barth as his counter-example. (Barth is well known as a theologian opposed to natural theology!) But Barth does not begin with the phenomenon of God in a positivistic manner, to be read and interpreted by the theologian, but with the living Word who, by the Spirit, addresses humanity and thus reveals the being of God. Zizioulas confirms his parting from theology based on revelation by dismissingly stating “ontology as manifestation is (perhaps?) possible for the ‘economic’ theology [meaning Barth?] which is accomplished ’in time’ but not also for an ontology of the Trinitarian existence of God who is outside of time.” Therefore, I cannot help but conclude, here and throughout this thesis, that Zizioulas has rejected theology based on the revelation of God in Christ as proposed by Barth.
essential being of a thing or a person. Thus, they believed that God was known empirically. Their observation of the material world suggested a unified structure, a giant stage which moved in harmony. In this context, they conceived personhood as a superficial, transient thing—that mask which was worn as part of the play. Freedom was accomplished by playing different roles, putting on different masks in life. Fundamentally, however, personhood was constituted by the concrete individuality of a human who assumed an identity in relation to other actors. Hence, despite their concern for essential being, they failed to understand the essence of personhood. There was no hypostasis, no elemental being of a person described, claims Zizioulas, until the Cappadocians later identified the being of a person as fundamentally constituted by one’s relation to other persons.

The Gnostic rejection of the material world further clouded the issue of personhood with dualism. By devaluing the material and elevating the ideal, the Gnostics sought to escape the material world through special knowledge. Consequently, personhood was regarded as the rational, reflective aspect of human existence—a view which promoted individualism and self-perfection and later led to monasticism. Ultimately, Gnostic dualism spawned those forms of Christian rationalism and pietism which perceived the person as the inward, spiritual (as opposed to material) aspect of human existence.

Roman concepts of personhood echoed Greek thought in their emphasis on the role one played in the structure of society. The individual ability to form associations within an organized whole granted one status as a person. Societal involvements—preferably prestigious ones—defined fulfillment in personhood. Such formulations, when applied to God, led to the Sabellian notion of divine role-playing. Consequently, personhood was not defined ontologically; it was identification with a role.

Zizioulas turns from his criticisms of these ancient philosophical distortions to a critique of the church, in which he particularly scrutinizes the western church. He chastises the west for succumbing to the detrimental, dominant legacy of Augustine’s substantial ontological understanding of God, whose divine essence constitutes unity and whose three persons are nearly inconsequential. Notions of prior divine essence suggest that personhood is the mere individual manifestation of a more basic stratum of divine being. Resultingly, the west conceives three

59 BAC, pp. 33–34.
60 BAC, pp. 32–33 and ‘T2EC,’ pp. 35–36.
61 ‘ECC,’ p. 39.
62 Later we will question whether the distinction between biological and ecclesial being, with the emphasis on the latter, might follow this error.
individual persons who have a common divine essence.

When addressing the issue of what constitutes human personhood, the biological or rational element is regarded as the essential, empirically-determined, element of personhood. Such a focus emphasizes the individuality of human existence. Augustine stressed the intellect and self-consciousness as the key to personhood, such that knowledge of the individual soul was acquired through introspection. Consequently, the spiritual life became an inward matter and personhood was associated with that which was maintained in the self-consciousness of the individual. From this vantage point, personhood was projected anthropomorphically onto the Trinity, who was depicted in terms of the inward, psychological elements of human persons.

Such individuality and anthropocentric definitions of personhood, Zizioulas claims, still permeate western culture. This culture has a defective model passed on from the early church, when personhood became increasingly individualistic, with a perception of spirituality distinct from (and opposing) the world and its passions in the pursuit of self-perfection or fulfillment.

The Middle Ages fostered this mistaken identification of personhood with reason and Descartes furthered the Augustinian tradition by identifying personhood with the thinking individual. Cartesian philosophy contributed to the final enthronement of human rationality in the Enlightenment. Ultimately, the Reformation failed to escape the seduction of individualism and, reaffirmed the authority of the individual by focusing on the right of each person to interpret scripture individually. Although the goal was spiritual maturity, it was maturity for each independent soul and as such was flawed by the individualistic structure. According to Zizioulas, such systems were responsible for developing a “man-centered and reason-dominated world view.”

He believes that the modern western church still operates with an individualistic, historically-confined understanding of the Trinity, and an isolationist, rational conception of human persons. Such formulations, he argues, define the church as an organization constituted by a conglomeration of these units. Ecclesiology which is based on individualistic Christology and which focuses on the activity of God in the world has produced church activism (both social and self-perfecting pietism). Although these are commendable concerns, appearances are deceiving

---

64 Zizioulas contends that the east adopted an alternative ontology which is based on involvement with the community of God.
in such an instance: the emphasis is on what the individual does and is, therefore, egocentric.

Furthermore, the emphasis on rational individuality influenced the west to develop a confessional mentality. Spirituality became a matter of formulations and belief in correct theological propositions. In such a paradigm, because persons are such by virtue of rationality, each has the right to private beliefs and to gather with others who share the same confession. Herein lies the beginning of the scandalous western fracture through which the unity of the church is destroyed. 67

Challenging these emphases, the eastern church has focused on liturgical experience, tasting the eschaton in the present in the context of worship. Its future interest is effected by the Holy Spirit, who enables the church to transcend linear history in order to participate in the eternal.69 This has created a triumphalism which, in turn, has led to the neglect of social issues.

Zizioulas believes that the western church’s concern with historical and ethical discussions is an imbalance created by its emphasis on Christology whereas the eastern church is absorbed into meta-historicism and worship, an imbalance created by its emphasis on pneumatology. Both rely on inadequate conceptions of personhood: one is individualistic; the other is eschatological.70 Unhappy with both trends, Zizioulas asserts that personhood cannot be conceived separately from the being of God, who affects both our historical and eschatological existence wholistically.71


67 Note that although Zizioulas points the finger of blame toward the west, it is necessarily problematic in the east as well. The division between east and west resulted from differences over the form of a confession and both west and east argued over a proper filioque formulation. The point of the debate was over the ontology of God, but the formulation of the confession was significant enough for both east and west that they parted ways. One must ask whether either side could truly live graciously before God with the other in spite of the difference or if being right (confessionally) was more important. Furthermore, Zizioulas proposes that one of the main purposes of Being As Communion is “to work with a view to a synthesis between the two theologies, Eastern and Western.” (BAC, p. 26) He proposes a synthesis of the two communities’ perceptions of God so as to arrive at agreeable confessions. Clearly, confessionalism is not simply a western problem.

68 BAC, p. 19.

69 PDC, p. 146.

70 But Zizioulas states, “The truth and the ontology of the person belong to the future, are images of the future.” (Italics his) BAC, p. 62. One’s personal being is grounded in the future, not in historical existence. We shall see later that he does not escape this error. Proper personal ontology affirms historical and eschatological existence. Zizioulas wants this, but falls short, opting for true ontology in the eschaton.

71 BAC, p. 20.
He contends that the western secular understanding of personhood, contextualized by empiricism and individualism, relies solely on individual ability to define personhood. Rejecting God (and, hence, the ground of reality), humanity can only observe and describe objective data of existence. Tragically, it believes that this is adequate and ignores the fact that individual autonomy merely promotes formulations which reflect individual needs and desires rather than reality.

Such anthropocentically derived conceptions mock claims to truth and, instead, create chaos in relationships. Human self-definition and self-fulfillment are the product of human arrogance and cannot create community. Pursuing individual fulfillment, persons assume that they understand not only what they are, but what they should be. Along with such assumptions, they believe in their own capacity to fulfill this quest; however, such attempts are frustrated immediately because they disregard the other—both divine and human—who is essential to personal being and becoming.

Zizioulas believes that self-effort in the church promotes pride in success and corresponding guilt or shame in defeat. He argues that personal growth occurs only through relationships with others. Therefore, the church is responsible to facilitate such relationships rather than to instruct its members in cognitive knowledge about God. He notes that theology which is concerned primarily with confessions and propositional truth inadvertently reveals its genesis in rational human capabilities and betrays the task of bringing the church to its true Head in a relationship of communion. 72

He proposes that, in order to fulfill its task of facilitating relationships, the church must understand the nature of God. Ironically, he refers the east and west to the Cappadocian formulations of the personhood of God (raising suspicion that he fails to escape his own criticism of western obsession with confessionalism). He rejects western Gnostic ontology because he asserts that there is no philosophical justification for knowing the person of God, who is the prior existant from whom all dialogues about personhood and freedom commence. 73 He suggests that the Cappadocians properly formulated an ontology of personhood by identifying God as one being by virtue of the free communion that exists between three persons. 74

72 ENV, p. 316. Zizioulas may have diminished the confessionalism in his theology, but he has not eradicated it as foundational—he clearly values right understanding.

73 It should be noted that, at this point in the dialogue, he dismisses all philosophical discussions and simply affirms Cappadocian formulations. He never explains how we know the eternal Father who alone sends the Son and Spirit and merely asserts that we cannot know the ontology of God from God’s economic activity. BAC, p. 45, footnote 40.

74 BAC, pp. 89–92. It is pertinent to ask what the term “between” refers to here. Zizioulas proposes that this communion is an ontological category. “Between” usually implies prior points of reference.
Zizioulas regards a proper formulation of personhood to be essential, not only for the reconciliation of the east and west factions of the church, but for its very existence. Consequently, he believes that the ancient task of understanding, clarifying, and affirming, through ecumenical discussion, the being of God, and God's personhood, is the sine qua non of all theology and Christian life.

1.3 Introduction to Karl Barth

Karl Barth, born in 1886, was educated in the liberal school of thought so characteristic of nineteenth century Protestant theology and which emphasized individual rationality. Barth's early theological pursuits arose from a concern for understanding the creed. Later, his focus shifted to the pastoral care of his congregation. As a pastor at Safenwil (1911-21), Barth found himself ill-prepared to meet the needs of his parish. Consequently, throughout the rest of his career, he wrestled with his ministerial responsibility of clearly articulating God's Word to his waiting congregation. It was this struggle that shaped the direction of his dogmatic theology.

While at Safenwil, he rejected the liberal theology which could so easily endorse corrupt European political systems and neglected people—a rejection tempered by the advent and passage of World War I. He found himself questioning the foundations of the theological legacy he had inherited and in the process of forming a coherent theology that would fulfill his pastoral duty, he challenged theologies based on self-consciousness and which imported cultural ideals into the gospel. Such anthropocentric systems directly contradicted the dynamic encounter with God that he believed preaching was supposed to facilitate. Barth believed the Word revealed the love and compassion of God, and he regarded the Word to be sufficient for this task—indeed, independent of all human presuppositions.

A significant factor in his theological development was his friendship with

and then describes the nature of the relation. In Zizioulas' proposal that God exists as communion, however, "between" is simultaneous with being. God's being is not in becoming (acting in time or eternity), but in unifying love ("The substratum of existence is not being but love," p. 97). However, love is not love without a loved one. Does Zizioulas regard communion as a truly ontological category? If the Father causes the Son and the Spirit and the communion between them, then the "between" is secondary, implying a hierarchy. Communion should imply eternal quality without priority. The points of reference, persons, must exist then only because of the dynamic nature of that which is referred to as existing always between them.


18
Eduard Thurneysen. Throughout their lives, Barth and Thurneysen continued the friendship which had begun at Safenwil, encouraging one another, as fellow pastors, in the development of a theology that brought the Word of God to the church. Thus, Barth cannot be regarded as merely an intellectual in dialogue with academics; he was a theologian whose primary concern was that his theology have a constructive effect on his—indeed, all—parishioners. For this reason, he co-authored many collections of sermons and nurtured a strong, continuing relationship with Thurneysen and a number of other pastors.

He was devastated when, in 1914, ninety-three German intellectuals proclaimed their support of the war policy of Wilhelm II. The group included most of Barth’s former teachers and on this “black day,” he realized that the theology of the nineteenth century, which could generate such conclusions in politics (and, in fact, all of ethics), contradicted his fundamental understanding of theology’s purpose and, therefore, held no future for him.\footnote{Karl Barth, \textit{The Humanity of God} (London: Collins, 1961), pp. 12–13. Hereafter \textit{HOG}.} Although it appeared to nurture an optimistic hope for the future of the race, its birth from human self-consciousness affirmed the supremacy of the human. Humanity’s attempts to heal itself through its own resources resulted in systems that were detrimental to human relationships and challenged the lordship of God. He realized then that dogmatics, wrongly formulated, resulted in faulty—even destructive—ethics.\footnote{Simon H. Rae, “Gospel, Law and Freedom in the Theological Ethics of Karl Barth,” in \textit{SJT} 25 (1972): 412.} Confronted with the evil fostered by such anthropocentric theologies, Barth challenged the presuppositions which led to flawed systems. He rejected anthropological religion in favor of the reality of the kingdom of God and its interruption into the world. It was an approach he never relinquished. This stance affected all his work was especially evidenced in his active socialism and ministry to prisoners.\footnote{Eberhard Jüngel, \textit{Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy}, trans. by Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), p. 93.}

Another vital occurrence in Barth’s theological development was his rediscovery of the Bible (1916–17) as God’s revealed Word in distinction from all human words. He learned that this Word was not about ideas (separate from the world) but about God, who enters the present world to share in human life, suffering, and hope. The Word was not a dispensation of formulas, but a person who came with power. On this basis, Barth rejected the idealism of the Romantics and the religious mechanism of pietism.\footnote{Eberhard Busch, \textit{Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts}, trans. by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), pp. 98–101.} At this point, the perspective of Hermann Kutter, who emphasized the prophetic knowledge of the living God over all human efforts,
significantly impacted Barth—and continued to do so in his subsequent challenges to anthropocentric formulations.\textsuperscript{80} He understood that God was God, not part of the world; therefore, knowledge of God was personal rather than rational.\textsuperscript{81}

This was the missing dimension in liberal theology and it re-orientated Barth to wait on God, living in response to God's previous action. God is revealed, and he believed that the church must simply proclaim the ongoing activity of God's self-revelation. With respect to the specific issue of personhood it is not self-attained; it is a gift bestowed in encounter with God. Nowhere was this more clear to Barth than in Paul's letter to the Romans.

In the first edition of the \textit{Römerbrief} (1919), Barth unfolded the eschatological message of God's salvation in Christ. He found the scriptures were not so much about God, as they were from God, revealing God's activity on behalf of God's creation, especially humanity. This book marks the beginning of the dialectical phase of Barth's theology. Responding to Sören Kierkegaard's recognition of the infinite qualitative distinctive between God and creation, Barth adopted this dialectic in order to facilitate a proper understanding of the personhood of God. The hiddenness of God was maintained in order that justice might be done to God's revelation. It is important to realize that Barth did not deny the possibility of knowing God, but was convinced that this knowledge must only come through God's actuality and encounter.

He also seriously considered the insight of Franz Overbeck, "Other than through audacity it is not possible to establish a basis for theology."\textsuperscript{82} Overbeck regarded Christian theology since the patristic era to be unchristian because it absorbed Christianity into its various surrounding cultures and thereby denied its eschatological nature.\textsuperscript{83} For Barth, the rejection of human confidence and the refusal to identify God with culture were the necessary prerequisites to speaking any true word about God. Hence, Overbeck and Kierkegaard were critical contributors to Barth's "No" to all words about the Word which are not from the Word. The Blumhardts, Kutter, and Kierkegaard also contributed to his concept of the "Yes" of

\textsuperscript{80}Busch, \textit{Karl Barth}, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{81}The Moravian Blumhardts also influenced Barth at this point. They proclaimed a victorious Christ who gives us hope in the world. The theologian could love both God and the world, but must begin with God. They also extended theology to include the eschatological dimension, not as a future dream, but as the inbreaking of God into present human history. Consequently, theology was a living encounter with God.


God: the revelation of God in a dynamic involvement with humanity. He asserted that one must always proceed from God to the human in pursuit of truth. To do otherwise is to introduce the subjectivity of human experience into the theological task, nullifying its authority and accuracy.

With the publication of Christian Dogmatics in 1927, Barth embarked on the existentialist phase of his theology. His concern was clearly Christological, but it was still addressed to the individual in such a way that God spoke to humanity on humanity’s ground. The dialectical presentation of God and humanity assumed an existence of the person apart from God. A further step was required to safeguard theology from possible entrapment in existentialist presuppositions. 84 Such a step was instigated by Barth’s study of Anselm, whose starting point for theology was Christ. 85

The dogmatic phase of Barth’s theology was inaugurated with the publication of his study of Anselm in 1931, and the publication of the first volume of Church Dogmatics in 1932. Finally, he comprehended the proper relation of theology and philosophy and could affirm the absolute priority of the Word in human knowledge.

He affirmed that, because God is revealed, humans can respond in faith and clarify their faith rationally in the form of theology, but “Let the Christian truth speak for itself.” 86 He believed the Word shapes the response of the human and disallows—and judges—philosophical presuppositions which promote human capacity or cultural superiority. In fact, he pointed out that the church can speak only because God has spoken and gifts the church with the Holy Spirit.

With Hitler’s rise to power (1933), a desperate need to oppose the cultural Protestantism of Germany and its anthropocentric values emerged. Its values significantly shaped the agenda of its theology, and they received, in turn, significant support from it. 87 Barth was firmly convinced that such improper theology was destructive. Therefore, he challenged theological, political, or cultural attempts to thwart the fulfillment of God’s purposes revealed in Christ. 88 At the end of his life, he summarized his theology as “... God for the world, God for humanity,

84 As in the case of Rudolph Bultmann.
86 Karl Barth, Karl Barth’s Table Talk, SJT Occasional Paper No. 10, ed. by John Godsey (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p. 45. Hereafter IT.
87 See Waite W. Willis, Jr., Theism, Atheism and the Doctrine of the Trinity: The Trinitarian Theologies of Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann in Response to Protestant Atheism (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 131–34, for his discussion of Barth’s theological encounter with Nazism. Also see Busch, Karl Barth, pp. 222–53.
88 Which affirmed humanity as God’s good creation, reconciled, and redeemed for fellowship with God.
heaven for earth." For Barth, this was manifested most clearly in his personal confrontation with the liberalism of his colleagues and with the nationalism of Germany.  

Throughout his career, he sought to clarify the Word of God in several contexts. We will briefly note here his engagement with (1) various forms of philosophy, (2) various church denominations, and (3) various individual theologians.

Barth constantly interacted with the field of philosophy because it so often surreptitiously elevated human reason above the Word. He was concerned to subordinate philosophy to the Word of God to ensure that no philosophy could become an independent authority. He believed that non-theological philosophies were phenomenological because they began with the human situation. Hence, though philosophy might describe human symptoms, it could never develop an ontology of personhood.

He concluded that Cartesian philosophy instigated reliance in the human individual and Kant furthered humanism by elevating reason over theology; specifically, by grounding knowledge in the apperception of the reasoning individual. The dualism characteristic of the Enlightenment significantly shaped liberal Protestant theology and conceived the individual as a solitary unit, which Barth believed constituted a form of inhumanity. In the Cartesian philosophical tradition, individual self-sufficiency became the new gospel and God became an unnecessary idea.


93 *CD* 3.2, pp. 230–42. See Barth’s excursus on Friedrich Nietzsche for an exposition of the solitary self standing against the crucified Christ and thus without fellow-humanity.

Barth also criticized four philosophical anthropologies: naturalism, ethical-idealism, existentialism, and theistic anthropology. Naturalism involved only the organic nature of the human and, thus, was an inadequate basis for formulations of personhood. The ethical-idealistic philosophies fell short in their focus on the unique rationality of the human with theoretical and moral qualities. The existentialist notion of the nature/spirit unity which existed in isolation was imprisoned by a powerful Unknown and which was transcended by the person who opened up a locked future. Finally, although theistic anthropology affirmed dynamic involvement between God and humanity, it was an inadequate basis because it defined humans as essentially separate from (though related to) God. Human freedom, in this paradigm, was conceived as autonomy rather than a gift granted by the free act of God. Thus, it denied the actuality already presented to humanity in Christ. Each of the four anthropologies failed because they were based on human self-reflection and phenomenological observation, merely echoing the Cartesian philosophical tradition.

According to Barth, naturalism needed no God. The idealist could not let God be God and allow God subsequently to inform humanity as to the true nature of persons. The idealist, therefore, empirically observed and projected ideas of ontology onto God (and human persons). Similarly, the classical realist could not listen to God, but based knowledge on experience. Thus, all encounters with others, whether God or human, were the only reality because reality was determined by human perception. With the advent of modern secular philosophy, the distinction between Creator and creation collapsed. An epistemology which transcended the fallibility of human subjectivity was necessary in light of the myth of human self-sufficiency. Thus, Carpe diem became a cry of the dissipated person attempting futile self-establishment.

Although he engaged heavily with philosophers, most of Barth’s criticism was directed toward branches of the church, especially the tradition from which he had broken (Protestant liberalism). It is important to note that he recognized that all forms of theology, because they are human words, contain an element of heresy and, therefore, require careful self-criticism so as to eliminate thought which is
Liberal Protestant theology had adopted anthropocentrism (borrowed from philosophical presuppositions) and, consequently, had established the individual as subject and Christ as predicate. Although Protestant liberalism attempted to build on the theology of the reformers, it had, in fact, accepted the scholastic dualism of faith and reason. With the rise of the humanistic absolutism of the eighteenth century, this emphasis had become an absolute priority of reason over faith. In the nineteenth century, the invasion of dualism was complete: the human was supreme and God was an idea. Revelation was rejected in preference to the autonomy of human reason.

Barth was agitated by liberal Protestant theology because fundamentally it confused theology with culture. Although it desired relevance to the modern world, it actually became absorbed into it. It was more interested in self-awareness and morality than in God, and ultimately subordinated theology to ethics. Consequently, prevalent societal thought forms molded religion in the attempt to make it culturally acceptable and the religious person modeled the same traits as the modern secular person.

Barth also challenged Roman Catholicism because he believed that its theology so closely linked the existence of Christ with the church that Christ was not the free Lord of his church. Furthermore, its preoccupation with ecclesiastically-mediated creeds and dogmas could not be a viable substitute for a personal relation with Christ. By emphasizing tradition and the authority of certain persons in the church, Catholicism substituted itself in the place of Christ: it attempted to represent the divine “I,” but supplanted him instead. Thus, Barth challenged the insistent, self-affirming authority of the Roman Catholic church in order to affirm the lordship of Christ.

99CD 1.1, pp. 32-34. Paul D. Matheny, Dogmatics and Ethics: The Theological Realism and Ethics of Karl Barth (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1990), p. 10, says, “In short, heresy necessitates theology.”


101Matheny, Dogmatics and Ethics, p. 4.

102Torrance, Karl Barth: Early Theology, p. 58.

103TT, p. 4.

104Matheny, Dogmatics and Ethics, p. 4.

105Torrance, Karl Barth: Early Theology, p. 58.

106TT, p. 4.

He believed that its fallacious approach to knowledge had created this dangerous dualism in its institutional structure. Its genesis in Augustinian and Thomist thought led to the notion that truth was the deposit of the church which, in turn, mediated human access to God through itself. Hence, the Roman Catholic church was not truly Christian because it appealed to a naturalistic foundation. Pursuing the *analogia entis* over *analogia fidei*, it confused nature with the divine and no longer listened solely to the Word which encountered it. Subly, Christ was assimilated into the institution. However, it is important to emphasize that Barth consistently urged dialogue with, rather than rejection of, the Roman Catholic church.

Barth also asserted that Roman Catholicism did not affirm the relational constitution of persons nor did it affirm that personhood is known through the particular humanity of Jesus Christ. Instead, it denied the humanity and dignity of individuals by regarding them as functionaries within a system rather than as persons loved by God and subject only to God.

Later in life, Barth identified a new opponent alongside of Protestant liberalism and Roman Catholicism: fundamentalism. In fundamentalism, Barth found the modern person’s attempts to control (rather than respond to) revelation. By adopting the rationalistic dualism of the Enlightenment, the fundamentalist could subordinate the living Word to a corpus of logical propositions deduced from scripture which then became the focus of faith. God was the source of truth in the form of teachings, but otherwise remained distant. Maturity was measured by one’s access to, and performance of, this system of propositions. Thus, truth was contained in scripture, but it was distinct from the being of God and could be expanded into a complete system of “truths” (also distinct from God’s dynamic self-communication). Ultimately, church authority was derived from biblical text (as interpreted by its leadership) rather than submitted to the lordship of the triune God. Fundamentalism did not conceive of persons dynamically, but rather as rational possessors of truths.

Although Barth commented very little on Eastern Orthodoxy, he did identify

---

107 By using this terminology, I am broadly distinguishing between traditional individualistic conceptions of the person and proposing that personal being ontologically exists in relation with other persons. The concise articulation of what this means is a primary task of this thesis.
108 *TT*, p. 41.
it as one of those forms of heresy (along with Neo-Protestantism and Roman Catholicism) which the evangelical church must oppose.\textsuperscript{111} Its heresy was that of adhering to a form of dogmatics unsubmitted to the rest of the one, true church of Christ. Its authority was apart from, and hence alien to, the lordship of Christ.

Prominent among the significant individuals with whom Barth dialogued was Friedrich Schleiermacher, whom Barth believed was the father of all anthropocentric theologies. He was, therefore, a chief target in Barth’s corrective task.\textsuperscript{112} Friedrich Schleiermacher was led astray by idealistic philosophy, which portrayed human existence as the sum of the capacities, tendencies, and activities of human self-consciousness, and consequently defined religion as a human predisposition toward piety.\textsuperscript{113} As he put it, “Religion belongs to the nature of man.”\textsuperscript{114}

However, Schleiermacher was not a classic idealist because he focused too intently on the present. Rather, his was a form of positivism founded on facts already established in the human and in history. His theology was grounded in human intuition and a feeling of absolute dependance upon God. Human consciousness, within the finite, partook of the infinite. Contrary to some people’s presentations of Schleiermacher, he asserted that knowledge of God was not to be confused with knowledge of self (projection). Instead, God was an objective constant of the religious experience of faith (as subjective feeling).\textsuperscript{115} God was “revealed” to the human in the “immediate experience (sensuous) of the aesthetic unity of nature.”\textsuperscript{116}

Barth challenged such an epistemology because it did not distinguish between God and the human (the human spirit was identified with the Holy Spirit). Personhood could be defined only as the self-interpretation of the pious Christian self-consciousness and was exemplified in the \textit{homo religiosus incurvatus in se}.\textsuperscript{117} In Schleiermacher’s theology, the human met God in the religious self-consciousness of the individual.\textsuperscript{118} Essentially, religion became a life of individuation: a series

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{CD} 1.2, p. 829.
\textsuperscript{112}Barth, \textit{Theology of Schleiermacher}, p. ix.
\textsuperscript{113}\textit{CD} 1.1, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{114}TC, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{115}Matheny, \textit{Dogmatics and Ethics}, pp. 75–76.
\textsuperscript{117}\textit{CD} 4.1, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{118}Phillip Rosato, \textit{The Spirit as Lord} (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981), pp. 3–4. Rosato claims Barth is pneumatocentric in direct response to Schleiermacher’s anthropocentrism. See also \textit{PTNC}, p. 472. “Thus it seems necessary for us after all to begin to consider whether what has happened here is that it is not the Holy Spirit, but, as Schleiermacher claims, merely man’s religious consciousness which has after all become the theme of theology.”
of memorable occurrences and experiences in which an individual surrendered the self to insights derived from nature, history, society, or inner life.\textsuperscript{119}

Barth also opposed Georg F. Hegel's speculative idealism which gave liberal theology the basic principles and terminology for its articulation.\textsuperscript{120} Positively, Hegel's system allowed for scientific development; negatively, it granted only a finite conception of God because it grounded knowledge in human reason. Hegel subordinated eternity to time and the personhood of God to the reasoning human self.\textsuperscript{121} Hegel's "faith" was a human consciousness of absolute truth and, hence, reality was that in which one had "reasonable" faith.\textsuperscript{122} True humanity was realized in rational thought; therefore, reason became the unlimited and absolute event of conceptualization in which everything—including God—was known.\textsuperscript{123}

Rudolph Bultmann, another notable opponent, fostered the notion that truth was a product of human determination and was contextualized by human needs.\textsuperscript{124} Such a formulation neglected the historical revelation of God in Christ because of its predisposition to contemporary existential human needs. Hence, Bultmann's theology is aptly termed Christianocentric.\textsuperscript{125} Bultmann's "demythologizing" program preoccupied Barth throughout the \textit{Church Dogmatics} because, simultaneous with the promulgation of his own program, it offered an objective point of reference outside of the being of God whereby a theologian could identify and separate myth from the truth.

Bultmann's re-interpretation of the incarnation was a thinly veiled, neo-Kantian, existentialist philosophy which conformed the gospel to secular culture. Consequently, his formulations of the Christian faith assumed the character of Gnostic speculation whereby the informed person, who was unburdened from myths of the past, was elevated to a special status in an act of self-redemption.

Barth believed Bultmann had missed a proper understanding of starting point for theology: Christ.\textsuperscript{126} Despite Bultmann's concern for the modern person and the

\textsuperscript{119}TC, pp. 178–79.
\textsuperscript{120}Torrance, \textit{Karl Barth: Early Theology}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{122}\textit{PTNC}, pp. 391–93.
\textsuperscript{123}\textit{PTNC}, pp. 398–99.
\textsuperscript{124}T, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{125}Rosato, \textit{The Spirit is Lord}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{126}\textit{TT}, p. 53. His disinterest in the historical Jesus led to Docetism and his notion that we believe only because of the faith of the apostles led to Ebionitism.
Christian faith, his system could not facilitate what it promised. Instead, it merely portrayed what Bultmann believed Jesus would have looked like had he lived in the twentieth century rather than summoning people to listen to the living Christ who, is the Lord over time.

Barth also challenged fellow Swiss theologian, Emil Brunner, because he clung to natural theology and attempted to establish a point of contact between God and humanity outside of revelation. Brunner’s belief in a “capacity for revelation” which constituted persons in their “likeness to God” defined humanity by a class concept based on psycho-physical abilities. Personhood was realized through the fulfillment of latent potentiality—a definition which offended grace and placed the discernability of truth in human hands. Brunner’s point of contact between God and humanity, therefore, was not the living Word (the real human: Jesus), but the fact that we are created in the imago Dei. Herein lies his mistaken reliance on an image derived from the human context rather than from God. Such an enterprise could not serve humanity because it merely mirrored itself. Thus, Barth criticized Brunner’s natural theology because it provided an anthropocentric preamble to faith which obscured the self-revelation of God in Christ and so denied the freedom of God. Knowledge, then, was not an act of grace, but a human ability.

This introduction to Barth’s primary theological concerns, criticisms, and development, concludes with a brief overview of his characteristic approach, as presented in his Church Dogmatics. It is appropriate to note here that his dogmatics always reflected a personal emphasis and sought to present the persons of the Trinity clearly to human persons. He could not dialogue about God other than the triune God revealed in Christ and witnessed to in the Bible. Because he emphatically believed God was known in the act which reveals God’s being, Barth could not speak of knowledge of God other than as knowledge through Christ. Thus, Christ was central to human knowledge and rational definitions must be derived from Christ, the source of knowledge. Therefore, theological terms could be defined only from a Christological context, and when referring to revelation, Barth did not suggest he was referring to facts about God or systems sent by God. Furthermore, God never became an object in revelation, but was consistently the

128 Barth, Natural Theology, p. 80. Macmurray clearly commits this error, as we shall see in chapter eight.
129 Barth, Natural Theology, p. 88.
130 CD 1.1, p. 303.
subject, an "I," who addresses humanity as "Thou." 

When speaking about God, therefore, it is improper to assume that the being of God corresponds in some way to human existence. Such a posture gives priority to creation over the Creator God. Attempts to gain knowledge of God through the nature of creation—the *analogia entis*—are grounded in human reason and encroach on God’s self-revelation. If words about God are to be accurate, they must proceed from God to humans. Hence, the self-revelation of God in Christ is the only true unveiling of God. As such, it is received by faith, the *analogia fidei*. To use the term "person" of God, then, one must begin with Christ and subsequently define human persons from this context. Furthermore, the creature’s dependence on God for true knowledge requires that any theological depictions be modest: they cannot control the original Word as they seek to articulate that Word.

Because God and humanity correspond in the person of Jesus Christ, Barth’s theology increasingly reflected on the person of Christ. He confronted all church systems, political agendas, and moral stances with the question, “Who are you as Lord, Jesus?” and herein lies the motivation for each of his challenges to individual theologians, to cultural Protestantism, and to the various branches of the church. He asserted that Christ is the Lord who said “No” to natural theology; who calls the church to confess Christ as Lord; and who rejects outright any legislation of right behavior. Because he believed that God has loved and encountered humanity in an act of freedom, Barth’s theology doggedly challenged any word that confused this point. In order to be understood correctly, therefore, Barth’s theology must be recognized as personal in nature. He believed that theology is about relationships and is derived from a personal revelation in Christ.

It is important to note that, whereas Barth’s early theology emphasized the *diastasis* (distance) of God as wholly other, his later theological enterprise stressed God’s self-revelation in Jesus. God corresponds with humanity through the Word in order to facilitate togetherness and Christ has provided the means for an analogy.

---

134 *CD* 2.1, p. 257.
135 Thus, Barth thought a better title for Berkouwer’s book, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, to be *The Freedom of Jesus Christ in the Theology of Karl Barth*. See Busch, *Karl Barth*, p. 381. He believed both "Triumph" and "Grace" were too static and removed from the center of theology which is the person of Christ.
a correspondence, in his encounter. Humanity, then, is with God because God has come to humanity.\textsuperscript{136}

Barth came to believe that theology, defined as an abstract doctrine of God, was unchristian, and proposed instead a "the-anthropology:" a doctrine of the relationship between God and humanity.\textsuperscript{137} In this pursuit, he rejected dualistic and monistic forms of theology in favor of a unionistic form,\textsuperscript{138} in which theology is essentially a discussion of personal relationships.

The role of scripture is to witness to the person of Christ, who encounters persons through the Bible. Barth's assumption, however, was that in scientific theology, the concrete reality always precedes its analysis and interpretation. Thus, one comes to the subject matter (the Word) and not just the text (words).\textsuperscript{139} The Bible is, therefore, the church's witness to Christ, who reveals the triune God; however, it does not precede God. Throughout his life's work, Barth attempted to listen to the witness of scripture and to address issues from its context—whether as a joyful proclamation or as a sharp confrontation.\textsuperscript{140}

Because the church owes its existence to the personal encounter of God, Barth called it to respond to God's encounter. Theology is one response among many, as are adoration, thanksgiving, and petition.\textsuperscript{141} The church's task is to proclaim the reconciliation already experienced and offered in Christ as a gift and, hence, the church cannot contrive systems or principles based on human genius or even propositions derived, but apart, from God. It can only receive the living Word and, in turn, offer the living Word to the world.

The task of dogmatics, then, is scientific self-examination for the purpose of ridding the church of foreign words which detract from this one Word and to offer directions, insights, principles, and limits in order that the church might have correct speech.\textsuperscript{142} Thus, Barth conscientiously avoided "systematic theology"\textsuperscript{143} and espoused, instead, theology as a free science by virtue of the fact that it speaks

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{136}HOG, pp. 40–42.
\item \textsuperscript{137}HOG, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{138}Karl Barth, "A Theological Dialogue," Theology Today 19 (1962): 172.
\item \textsuperscript{140}Hence, Church Dogmatics. The theologian's task is in the church and for the church by constantly referring it back to Christ. For this reason, Barth approached his task with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. This approach acknowledged theology as a dialogue between God and humanity, bringing the concerns of one to the other.
\item \textsuperscript{141}HOG, p. 88.
\item \textsuperscript{142}CD 1.1, p. 86.
\item \textsuperscript{143}Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, trans. by G. T. Thompson from the German edition of 1947 (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 5. Hereafter DIO.
\end{itemize}
of One who has a kingly freedom.

Barth, in the later years of his life, shifted the emphasis of his work to focus on this free love of God. Thus, I suggest a fifth phase in Barth’s theological development: namely, evangelical theology (a time of freedom). In this phase, his emphasis on the “Yes” of God dominated the theological dialogues in which he engaged. Now the days of confrontation were past, and he admitted that his theology was less formal, less abstract, more concrete. Indeed, we might say he was concerned more than ever with the person of God, who is freely for human persons. Here, as throughout his work, he sought to extricate the theology of the church from the insidious snare of anthropology.

To recall the specific concerns of this study, Barth understood personhood to be a theological issue, subordinate to the person of the Word. Whenever philosophical or cultural presuppositions attempted to inform or to infiltrate theology, he identified them as alien words which undermined and confused the Word of God and, hence, the truth about personhood. He believed the task of the dogmatic theologian was to critique constantly the word proclaimed in the church so that the Word of God was not compromised. Theologians needed to clarify, carefully and responsibly, the person of God so that God may be known. God has addressed the church and the world for the purpose of restoring persons in relationships and is known particularly and actually in the person of Christ. Revelation, then, is not as a historical recollection, but is the work of the Holy Spirit in a present encounter in the church.

Barth’s theology was permeated with his concern for properly understood personhood because the personal God, known through the person of Christ, restores human personhood through a personal relationship between God and humanity. For Barth, quite simply, “We belong to God,” and herein lies true personhood.

Conclusion to Introduction

From this introductory outline of the concerns of John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth, I offer some general preliminary distinctions between the three. Macmurray is a philosopher whose social agenda is worldwide peace; Zizioulas is an ecumenical theologian whose theological agenda is the reconciliation of east and west; Barth is a pastoral theologian whose agenda is to interpret the Word of

---

144 Barth, “Theological Dialogue,” p. 177.
145 ET, pp. 70–72.
God for the church. Each, in his own way, is concerned about free personhood—possibly because each has such a strong, although distinctive, social concern to heal fractures in human relationships. Unfortunately, as will be evidenced in the following chapters, Macmurray's and Zizioulas' agendas are based on possibility rather than actuality. Macmurray relies on human capacity whereas Zizioulas relies on ecclesial capacity. Barth alone bases his agenda on actuality: namely, the person of Christ.
In this chapter, I show that John Macmurray conceives human personhood to be constituted in relation, which, although based on a prior capacity given by God, is achieved through human implementation. Furthermore, he believes that the fulfillment of personhood is freedom. Here I articulate Macmurray's understanding of personhood and in chapter five I clarify what he believes fulfilled personhood to be.

Macmurray emphasizes the personal nature of the universe by affirming the matrix of relations created by God. Within this framework, he discusses personhood (what is shared in common) and personality (the specific development of each human into a personal individuality). "Against the assumption that the self is an isolated individual, I have set the view that the self is a person and that personal existence is constituted by the relation of persons."1 "Being in relation" is more than mere proximal fact: it is intentional involvement with other persons in reciprocal interrelatedness. Heterocentricity heightens, rather than diminishes, individuality and establishes and develops personality. Macmurray believes personhood is based on human capacity and affirms that "individual independence is an illusion"2 that can never facilitate human freedom.

1 *SA*, p. 12.
2 *PR*, p. 211.
2.1 The Contexts of Human Personal Existence

Here, I overview the personal nexus which Macmurray describes as the field of personal existence.3

2.1.1 Field of the Personal

Action is essentially personal: it is the fulfillment of an intention by an agent in the world. Historically, this led to the conclusion that the development of personhood, beginning with infancy, was a process of learning to fulfill one's intentions. However, Macmurray believes that first one must learn to discriminate different elements in the Other upon which one is to act and it is discrimination of the world which is the acquisition of knowledge. The world is personal from birth because it is constituted by knowledge of the one "with whom I am in communication, who responds to my cry and cares for me."4 Thus, knowledge of the Other is firstly personal and personal relations are consequently presupposed in all other development of learning throughout one's life. This is evidenced most clearly in the necessary acquisition of language and social behavior from the context of interaction with the personal Other. The field of personal relations, into which a child enters, is the nexus of personal being and it is the intention of other persons to be in relation to which the infant first responds with dependence and, subsequently, with interdependence and thereby develops the "self." It is the sphere in which one is personally enlaced (the field of the personal) that contextualizes all knowledge.

Macmurray identifies this field as "the whole manifold of entities, activities and relations to which the term 'personal' is applicable."5 "Personal" being is a property that all persons share, separating them from that which is non-personal. It is distinguished from personality (personal individuality), which expresses the element of distinction between one person and another.6

The field of the personal is a dynamic network of relations, manifested in shared activity, and is essentially a personal attitude that individuals have toward one

---

3 There are two aspects to this nexus. The field of the personal is ascertainable through human observation and religion refers to the same field, but acknowledges God's involvement which significantly shapes the personal nexus.

4 PR, pp. 76–77.

5 PR, pp. 24–25.

6 PR, p. 25. An individual is defined in terms of internal reflection: that inward focus which is assumed to be knowledge of "the Self" and is an experience common to all individuals. Such a definition portrays all selves as nearly identical in their experience of the world, knowing the world equally, and depicts the thought world as reality. In this paradigm, then, is the beginning of dualism.
another whereby the other is treated as a person, not an object. Louis Roy criticizes Macmurray for his unclear articulation of “personal attitude,” though he approves of the notion of the primacy of the personal.7 In defense of Macmurray, it must be noted that personal attitudes are inherently difficult to define because objective descriptions are necessarily impersonal, isolating a particular aspect as a class concept. Macmurray attempts to answer the challenge by portraying the nature of this attitude through illustrations and contrasts, and appeals to the sensibility of the reader to derive the concept intuitively.

A personal attitude differs from a scientific one, which impersonally regards persons as objects of study. In a scientific approach, one formulates an anthropology based on isolated observation and factual records which note similarities and patterns common throughout the research. In this context, the human is identified as a class concept—*homo sapiens*—thinkers whose characteristics may be observed and categorically described. Such an approach, however, requires that attention be limited to specific parts of the human and, hence, that the observer ignore the dynamic unity of persons.

Science’s value is that many aspects of life require isolated objective attention; however, its fault lies in its inadequate, restrictive formulations which neglect the unity of human experience and personal interaction.8 Science is impersonal and precise9 and Macmurray asserts that the study of persons requires a methodology appropriate to the task; namely, a serious encounter with others in mutual self-revelation.

Personhood is not correlative with the material world (of objects) nor with the organic world (of organisms), but is constituted by involvement and co-relation with other persons, and is never known scientifically in isolation.10 Hence, the dialogue must proceed not from an exact science, but from a philosophy which articulates the nature of personhood in a manner appropriate to the freedom of

---

8PR, p. 38. See also Kirkpatrick, “Toward a Metaphysic of Community,” p. 568, where he distinguishes three categories of relationships: 1) those which mark human life in liberal, individualistic, capitalistic societies and are based on atomism, mechanism and contract relations, 2) those which are organic, functional—opposed to individualism—and stress interdependence orchestrated by the state, and 3) (Macmurray’s personal model) those which emphasize interrelationship, focusing on the whole of human relations which, he states, “preserves the uniqueness of personal relationship and the integrity of intention and action unique to persons.”
9Logically, an impersonal study of persons is inappropriate because one *a priori* denies the personal involvement necessary to know others as persons, rather than as objects.

35
dynamic interactive beings. Macmurray says,

... a being who can pretend to be what he is not, to think what he
does not think, and to feel what he does not feel, cannot be known by
generalizations from his observed behavior, but only as he genuinely
reveals himself.\textsuperscript{11}

Blaikie, concurring with Macmurray that knowledge comes through revelation,
challenges those who "affirm the objective methods of science as the sole source
of knowledge in the new world." Scientific method (in this sense) eliminates the
validity of "all the personal revelations upon which we are so dependent in our
personal lives."\textsuperscript{12}

Turning from scientific methodologies, Macmurray engages with the problem
of personhood from the field of personal relations because he believes that such a
study cannot begin with isolated individuals or it will foster the fallacious notion
that persons are impersonal objects of study. In the Gifford Lectures, Macmurray
proceeds with the self as agent, not as logically prior, but as a necessary starting
point to overthrow the theoretical standpoint of modern philosophy.\textsuperscript{13} Rejecting
the primacy of the theoretical, he revised the statement "that the Self exists only as
Agent" to "the Self exists only in dynamic relation with the Other."\textsuperscript{14} Such a shift
is necessitated by the logical order of Macmurray's system, which requires that the
personal nexus exist prior to the individual person. In fact, the idea of an isolated
person is self-contradictory.\textsuperscript{15} The personal network of the Other exists prior to
birth and development; hence, the phrase "person-in-relation" may wrongly suggest
that an individual exists who is integrated into the network of relations. Note that
the phrase is a tautology, since the very meaning of the term "person" refers to being
relationally constituted. Restated, it implies "a relational being is so in relation."
There is, therefore, no isolated person who moves into the nexus; one can only be
born as a fruit of it. As O'Connor points out, "... individuality is not a natural
fact but an achievement, the successful emergence from one-sided dependency to
a condition in which it becomes possible to assume responsibility for one's own

\textsuperscript{11} PR, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{12} Robert J. Blaikie, 'Secular Christianity' and the God Who Acts (London: Hodder and Stoughton,
\textsuperscript{13} SA, pp. 141–42. He recognizes this as an abstraction that was "legitimate for methodological
purposes."
\textsuperscript{14} PR, p. 17. He refers the term "Self," in this second volume of the Form of the Personal, to the
"subject as object of thought," concluding that it is a "metaphysical fiction" (p. 20) and, instead,
proposes the term "person" (p. 27).
\textsuperscript{15} PR, p. 24. "I exist only as one element of the complex 'You and I'."
development." 16 Involvement with other persons dynamically shapes personal being through increasing trust, friendship, and love. Simultaneously, persons are intertwined with others (personhood) and develop uniquely (personality).

Again, involvement with others is personal, intended activity. One reciprocally acts with other persons who give personal feedback (verbal or non-verbal) in a world that is comprehended through the language given by one's social context. Regardless of what involvement one has with the Other, it is necessarily a dynamic personal act. Hence, by replacing "I think" with "I do," Macmurray grounds personhood in cognitive participation in the world. 17

Personal agency has its correlate in "the Other does" and provides the basis of our interpersonal knowledge. 18 Therefore, to limit Macmurray's starting point to 'I act' is to inadequately describe a person by disregarding cognition of the act. 19 One cannot interpret the Self as Agent as isolated, but as a subsequent, correlative part of the personal whole. Personhood is not a precondition of humanity which is improved in relations: it is an element attained through activity with others, through involvement in communion outside of oneself.

Doing, then, is the person in self-transcendence. While organically immanent in the world, one intentionally engages with the personal nexus, relationally intertwined with the Other so as to constitute personal existence. Macmurray contends that "All knowledge of persons is by revelation." 20 If a person chooses to mislead or hide, that person is unknowable because personal knowledge depends on what the other does, not merely on what I do, and can only transpire in a context of love. Through the other's actions, interpreted with other aspects of self-disclosure, one apprehends that person's thoughts and intentions. 21 Fear inhibits self-revelation,


17 SA, pp. 88-90. Hence, personhood is fulfilled by employing those capacities with which I am endowed as a human, living with the Other. The section of this chapter entitled "The Self as Agent" will show how these human capacities are the necessary and sufficient means for involvement with the Other, whereby one derives personhood.

18 PR, p. 77.


20 PR, p. 169.

21 Roy, "Interpersonal Knowledge," p. 351, believes that Macmurray is mistaken in thinking that "the personal side of such a relationship is characterized by someone apprehending the thoughts of another" and argues that one grasps the feelings, thoughts, and intentions of another, not only
precludes the possibility of true knowledge of the other, and leads to illusory or unreal knowledge. True knowledge can be acquired only in a relationship based on trust whereby one extends oneself in love for the other, who is reciprocally involved.

Based on the distinction between interpersonal revelation and mere objective observation, one can establish two poles of relations: impersonal and personal.22 Personal attitude is engaged involvement, maintained in dialogue, whereby each seeks to comprehend the intention of the other through self-revelation. Impersonal relations reflect disengaged involvement with the other as object, observing the other as object. The difference between personal and impersonal relations is not in observable modifications of what one does, but in the intention of a person, a variation of attitude knowable only through self-revelation.23 Impersonal attitudes pervade common, everyday interactions: we identify others by their role and objectify them, not in the scientific sense, but in an inclinational sense classifying them in a system based on the role they play for us. In impersonal paradigms, we define others as a part of the social structure24 and impersonally know them as people who fulfill roles which are easily accomplished by a variety of others about whom we can say, “I know that person” and merely imply a knowledge of their function in society. Impersonal relations become personal in the acts in personal relations, but in all relations. He doubts that one can sort out personal features in human relations and although he does not imply that there is no personal field, he believes that it is difficult to observe and articulate another’s thoughts.

22Macmurray illustrates the distinction with an example of a psychologist. A student, wishing to consult about the progress of his/her work, begins the interaction with simple personal conversation. However, in the course of the conversation, it becomes clear to the psychologist that the student has a disorder. In response to this knowledge, the psychologist assumes an impersonal attitude toward the student, “observing and dealing with a classifiable case of mental disorder,” PR, p. 29.

23PR, pp. 29-30. See Roy, “Interpersonal Knowledge,” pp. 349ff., for his evaluation of the psychologist illustration. Also, Dorothy Emmet, Rules, Roles, and Relations, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1966, p. 171, points out that the relation of teacher to pupil has restraints as well as the psychologist to pupil role. The psychologist could not suddenly transfer from one attitude to another because there was already an impersonal element present. Macmurray, however, acknowledges that all personal relations have an element of the impersonal and vice versa that the impersonal attitude “is included in the personal attitude as a necessary negative and subordinate aspect of it,” PR, p. 34, 40. That there is a mixture of the two attitudes in all relations is not as foreign to Macmurray as Roy implies. However, Macmurray concludes that thoroughly impersonal relations are those which adopt a scientific attitude and categorize persons in order to establish their place in society and identify them in terms of role-function, relative to other persons. For example, an employer interviews a potential employee and a judge sentences an accused person. Each interacts with the other in a manner appropriate to that individual’s function.

24PR, p. 39.
of self-disclosure whereby one comes to know another personally and can then say "I know this person" and mean something entirely different. Impersonal role fulfillment has then become personal participation in one another's lives.

Historically, the understanding of the progression from impersonal to personal reflected the development of relations within the personal matrix. However, Macmurray believes that personhood develops firstly through personal relations and classification of persons by (impersonal) roles is a subsequent, learned behavior. Because personal relations are normal and impersonal attitudes are learned, Macmurray asserts that impersonal attitudes must be justifiable; that is, permitted only when they are adopted for the sake of personal relations. A personal attitude always seeks health or proper function. Therefore, right attitudes and actions are those which enable another to function in healthy, free relationships. From this premise, Macmurray will later propose his criteria for ethical considerations in impersonal relations.

Impersonal relations are functional relations and are permisssable only if they serve to facilitate personal relations whereby one takes a specific role within society and provides a service for other persons. Hierarchies are based on an attitude which treats others

... as members of a determinate class of objects in our environment whose presence and behavior limits, and so helps or hinders

25 *PR*, p. 35. Hence, when the psychologist changes his attitude toward the student, it is because the student's crippling dysfunction inhibits personal relations. An impersonal attitude is necessitated by two corresponding considerations: first, by the student's abnormal condition; second, by the need to restore that person to health. Abnormality results in a breakdown of relations and a loss of freedom. Thus, the psychologist must diagnose the disorder (impersonally) to return the student (now patient) to proper interpersonal relations.

26 Roy, "Interpersonal Knowledge," pp. 355-57, criticizes Macmurray's proposal of impersonal relations. He indicates that societal cooperation and friendship (personal relation) are elements found in any human relationship and the impersonal aspect is unclear. He also evaluates the constitutive principles of friendship as equality and freedom, stating that Macmurray has contrasted these to functional relationships. He concludes that "Macmurray's analysis lacks realism in not discussing the phenomena of leadership, authority and subtle manipulation," which he believes are present in all relations. However, equality is defined in reference to the personal dimension of relations, establishing friendship, not to the impersonal realm, which is where Roy applies it. Macmurray, however, clearly does not make such a strong contrast; rather, he notes that impersonal relations always have a personal element (*PR*, p. 34). A person may be both an equal (friend) to an employer and a subordinate (function) in the work place. According to Roy, personal equality is stifled in the domain of work by a hierarchy of functions. Macmurray, however, states, "Personal equality does not ignore the natural differences between individuals, nor their functional differences [emphasis mine]. It overrides them. It means that any two human beings, whatever their individual differences, can recognize and treat one another as equals, and so be friends." (*FMW*, p. 73.)
the realization of our own personal ends, and of whom we must take account, since their presence conditions our own actions.27

This attitude should have limited application and properly should be subordinated to the fulfillment of personal relations, which are the *sine qua non* of Macmurray's philosophical system.

Persons in mutual self-revelation are an essential element of the normal attitude of personal relations.28 They are "free agents, responsible for their own behavior, choosing their mode of action in the light of the distinction between right and wrong."29 In free interchange, the sense in which persons are an object for one another is subordinate to the apprehension of "the intentions, the feelings, the thoughts of another person who is in communication with ourselves."50 Roy lists four representative characteristics of Macmurray's personal attitude:

1. Being acquainted with the other.
2. Not seeing the other as object.
3. Respecting the other as free and equal.
4. Not treating the other as an object.31

Believing that not all of these elements are necessarily personal, he finds Macmurray's description inadequate and laments the ambiguity of terms like "object" and "treating," but provides no substantial replacements. O'Connor's correct response to this difficulty is that "the personal is the source of all metaphors and categories of understanding." Analogies fail because they attempt to fit the personal into a prior classification which does not exist.32

Personal relations are based on trust and developed through a positive shared history, which creates a context conducive to spontaneous self-revelation and leads to intimate friendships.33 Friendship is Macmurray's common expression for

---

27 PR, p. 40.
28 PR, p. 30. See also Louis Roy, "Interpersonal Knowledge," pp. 349–50, who claims, "Macmurray does not explain what a 'normal personal attitude' involves." Roy further clarifies this on pp. 352–53.
29 PR, p. 30.
30 PR, p. 34.
natural personal relations. His entire effort in the *Form of the Personal* arises from a desire to replace the structures of an individualistic society (which are based on theoretical philosophy) with a community of friends, who share personal action in the world as the starting point for philosophical knowledge. Hence, his (simplified) thesis is, “All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and meaningful action for the sake of friendship.” Without such friendships, the world is meaningless for persons. Personhood requires relations of love, trust, and mutuality to facilitate proper participation in the field of the personal.  

Roy accuses Macmurray of creating an overly distinct split between personal and impersonal relations and proposes that we must speak of a *spectrum* of relations. This, however, is a limited metaphor which merely places the relation at some point between two poles, whereas the personal nexus is much more complex and multidimensional.

Although friendship is Macmurray's goal, it does not replace impersonal relations entirely; however, it remains the necessary, prominent element in the whole complex of personal relations. He seeks to incorporate both in proper correspondence to any given situation. Personal and impersonal relations are not completely separate and both contribute to personal intercourse, but the personal factor must feature if people are to experience free, trust-based relationships. Thus, Macmurray's model of mixed elements is more fluid and dynamic than Roy's and eclipses the spectrum model.

It is valuable to note briefly the practical manifestations of human associations based on personal and impersonal attitudes. The associations of persons based on the priority of the personal attitude, is constituted by persons who live in fellowship and exist as a *community*. But if the associations emphasizes an impersonal attitude, it is constituted by individuals and exists as a *society*. Only when societies become communities through the intention of their members can they provide a context for freedom; a fulfilled state of living in proper relationship with others. Freedom, then, is the fruit of a human community. Hence, “The whole network of organized association has only one meaning: that it is the necessary foundation on which the personal life can be built.”

Macmurray points to the family as the model for all human communities. Unfortunately, it is unclear what kind of family he has in mind. He appears

---

34 SA, p. 15.
36 Roy, “Interpersonal Knowledge,” pp. 350-51. His spectrum model is supported by Dorothy Emmet, among others.
38 RE, p. 102.
to digress into idealism in this regard. "Our interest centres in the universal pattern which it exhibits." 39 Throughout his work, he uses terms like family, community, and religion almost interchangeably to mean a network of intentionally interconnected personal relations.

Next, I will show that, for Macmurray, the field of religion is nearly synonymous with the field of the personal. God, in this context, may be envisioned as an involved partner whose intention is to facilitate relationships which are based on trust and honesty, thereby creating a universal community. This can only happen when religion is grounded in this world, recants of idealism, and fulfills God's intention of creating a family at peace, whose members act lovingly toward one another and thereby experience true freedom.

2.1.2 Religion, God, and Personhood

The field of personal relations is essentially the field of religion. According to Macmurray, personal knowledge is possible only through the proper function of religion because both science and art provide only fragmentary knowledge. He believes that religion's purpose is to produce human community based on friendship. He claims, "... the relations which are the stuff of religious life are personal relations." 40 He challenges those who conceive of religion as the private activity of humans finding the divine in isolation. 41 Religion is concerned with a genuine human community that extends beyond itself and builds an intentional, love-based, global family. 42

Macmurray's concern to build a universal community is not (he believes) chosen arbitrarily: it is the logical fulfillment of our human nature—which, he

---

39 PR, p. 78.
40 John Macmurray, "Objectivity in Religion," in Adventure: The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith, ed. B. Streeter. New York: MacMillan, 1928, p. 183. Hereafter A:'OR'. Macmurray refers to the field of the personal interchangeably with the field of religion. See also John Macmurray, The Structure of Religious Experience (London, 1936), pp. 43, 45-47. Hereafter SRE. However, he believes God adds another element to the field of religion, as will become apparent in this section. The fact that human beings are interdependent leads him to believe that all persons act in the religious field (p. 45) and that human experience is "religious in its texture" (p. 46).
41 RE, p. 225. Here, he refers to Whitehead's comment, "religion is what a man does with his solitariness" as a complete reversal of the truth. He believes religion has to do with one's relations in the field of empirical experience. While this is an improvement, even this limitation seduces Macmurray to be anthropocentrically selective in defining persons.
believes, is religious. He demonstrates this human religious element in what he calls the "general facts" of religion:

1. No human society has ever existed without some kind of religion.

2. Religion is unique to persons, it is not found in animals.

3. Religion is the matrix from which all elements of culture have developed.

4. Religion, in intention, includes all members of a society and requires their participation to constitute it.43

Macmurray believes that only humans are (and always have been) religious. Culture is born of this religious nature, and religion ultimately includes all persons. The religious dimension is the distinctive, pervasive, seminal, and unifying feature of human existence. It is so because only humans have a reflective ability which enables them to remember and share their experiences of the world and God with subsequent generations. Each inherits the "meaning of life" as a legacy of the religious element in humanity and, hence, each is united with the historical human family which transcends mere biological connections by its capacity for love and bequeathed religion.

This religious element permeates the matrix of personal life. Everyday terms such as fellowship, communion, enmity, estrangement, guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation have a religious usage which is no different in meaning from their normal use; they simply are universalized to refer to the divine.44 With specific reference to how persons know God, Macmurray asserts that life is first lived (experienced), then reflected on. Finally, it refers to the human's experience of the relation with God. Therefore, he claims that "All human knowledge is necessarily anthropomorphic, for the simple reason that we are human beings."45

If this were Macmurray's final statement on how we know God, we could easily categorize him as a liberal Protestant who creates the divine from human experience; however, he has more to say.46 He concludes that all of life is relational

43PR, pp. 156-57. It is this study's contention that such "facts" are debatable and should be challenged extensively, but such a challenge is beyond the scope of this work. However, a brief critique will be conducted in chapter eight.

44SRE, pp. 53-54.

45SA, p. 116.

46See John C. Hoffman, "Religion and Religious Experience in the Thought of John Macmurray: A Critique," Studies in Religion 4 (1974): 1, footnote 5. Hoffman notes that by universalizing these common experiences and calling them religion, Macmurray uses the term for both 1) the field of intentional activity, and 2) the reflection associated with it. Generally, Macmurray uses "religion" for the first and "theology" for the second, though he is inconsistent.
and has a religious dimension; therefore, religion is not confined to morality. It includes the whole of human interaction for the purpose of fulfilling human nature. Fulfillment is accomplished through intentionally valuing others and through shared life experiences. As such, it requires that persons focus outward, actively engaging with others. Thus, religion occurs in the shared world rather than in the isolated world of the individual self.

Macmurray describes this process as "empirical religion" because it focuses on the facts of experience. He believes that the field of religion alone values persons adequately because it perceives persons as intrinsically valuable. It is a reciprocal estimation (I value you for yourself, as you value me). Religion alone has the original, unified, personal attitude needed to facilitate a better world. Herein lies the roots of morality. Hoffman believes that Macmurray actually interchanges the term religion with morality in the Gifford Lectures. Religion becomes the field of morality, not as a code of rules, but as satisfactory activity compatible with community. Religion, then, is more than descriptive of human activity; it is prescriptive, defined by the intention of God.

The concerns of religion are not so much to find God as to fulfill God's intention through 1) action—the opposite of idealism's escape from the world and community into solitude, and 2) community—the realization of human beings as friends. In this pursuit, religious persons are involved in certain activities which Macmurray calls ritual. They reflect the active life of people who belong together in several ways. First, symbolically, they celebrate the common life they share, the meaningfulness they have to each other. Second, they bequeath traditions, establishing their unity over time with ancestors and posterity as a great family. Third, they celebrate their cooperation in daily life, in such areas as child rearing and food. Religion, then, is intentional participation in the fulfillment of community. As such, it is progressive and adaptive to a changing world. The Greek and Roman non-religious minds depended on stability and permanence for their ideals.

---

47SRE, p. 12. These facts must be interpreted, correlated, and organized through a process of valuation, a task which science and art cannot properly fulfill, especially in relation to other persons. Science and art, although perceiving persons differently in the field of social relations, both value persons functionally: the one values persons because they are observable objects of study and the other values persons as aesthetic objects (pp. 13–14).

48SRE, pp. 39–42.


50SRR, p. 59.

51SRR, pp. 31–32. Macmurray believes these two activities are fundamental to human life and notes that both activities raise distinct concerns. Child rearing, the fruit of marriage, raises the concern of sex. Secondly, the purpose of work is to acquire food and raises the concern of communism. It was while studying sex and communism that he adjusted his views on the nature of religion.
of perfection (good being that which does not change). However, the personal nexus necessarily reflects dynamic progression. Persons continually adapt in response to the material and social changes that confront them in order to realize their purpose. Specifically applied in the religious community, progress occurs when persons advance beyond mere reflection to action.

This external realization of internal purposes has two aspects: (1) it expresses the beliefs of persons, and (2) it affects and modifies the inner life of others, causing growth. Thus, religion materializes the reflective process and fulfills the very nature of humanity by transcending natural biological or cultural barriers. It actively engages with others, involving them in the personal matrix as valued constituents.

It is pertinent to inquire at this point whether God is really necessary and real in Macmurray’s system. He refers to God as though the name is representative of some reality; however, God appears to be a general, almost vague notion rather than particularly personal. Ferré believes that Macmurray perceives God as a descriptive symbol which supports universal community, and as a proper name for a real Being. Macmurray is not concerned to prove the existence of God; rather, he affirms that the “idea of a personal God is not obviously self-contradictory” and asserts that “it is the truth of the fact that God made Man in his own image, it is also true that Man makes his conception of God in his.”

He does not seek to depict God based on human analogies derived from physical or biological sciences; instead, he focuses his understanding of personal existence as applicable to God and challenges those who argue “that it is good for people to believe in God because the idea of God is necessary for the health of the human spirit.” He regards such a notion to be “high treason against the spirit of truth” and assumes that God’s existence corresponds to our conceptions, provided that they are grounded in reality. He asserts that the validity or invalidity of our beliefs

52 Science, for Macmurray, builds on this view of the world in that it requires a determined world to study. It is concerned with the static “being” of things whereas religion is interested in “becoming,” change reflecting the nature of reality in a world of action. CH, pp. 108–09.
53 Note: this is distinct from an evolutionary development, which is unintentional growth that occurs in the organic field. Progress, conversely, involves intentional cooperation by different individuals for a common end. CH, p. 114.
54 CS, p. 60.
57 A:’OR, p. 185.
58 SRR, p. 34.
59 CS, pp. 17–18.
does not affect the reality of God: it simply challenges the integrity of our search for reality. He exists apart from our thoughts.

He stresses that God is not a finite object we can study. God is necessarily personal because an impersonal God is a contradiction in terms. He asserts that the personal nature of the world evidences the fact that God is real (the fundamental postulate of religion) and that human activity participates in the reality of God. For Macmurray, God is the unity of the whole, but is also the individual and concrete universal person to whom all selves stand in relation as “that infinite person in which our finite human relationships have their ground and their being.” Anderson criticizes such a description, concluding that Macmurray has projected from the many (human relations) to the One (God). It is a criticism which is valid in some contexts, but is not based on a comprehensive reading of Macmurray, as will become clear in the discussion on incarnation; nevertheless, it is apparent that Macmurray continually emphasizes the human experience of relationship as fundamental to our concept of God. The question remains as to whether God is a

---

60 CS, pp. 10–20. Having formulated a concept of God, we can choose to accept or reject the formulation but this does not imply that, in so doing, we reject God. Rather, we challenge a specific conceptualization. Herein lies the positive value of atheism and communism which reject idealistic notions of God. Macmurray challenges both the atheist and the communist to search further, but congratulates each for rejecting that which is false.

61 How we obtain correct thoughts about God is inconclusive.

62 A‘OR, p. 183–84.

63 RE, p. 192.

64 SRE, pp. 80–81. See also PR, p. 164. “The universal Other must be represented as a universal Agent, whose action unifies the actions of every member of the community, and whose continuing intention is the unity of all their several intentions.”

65 Anderson, HT, p. 204. According to Anderson, it is a logical fallacy to argue from the many to the One. The common experience of being in relation does not necessarily imply that there is an existent, unifying Other; it merely implies that such an existence cannot be logically denied. (See also his discussion on p. 22.) Furthermore, he asserts, Macmurray does not appear to relate the religious dimension to the revelation of God. However, this is not entirely correct in that A‘OR builds on the objectivity of the incarnation as the starting point for religion. Unfortunately, Macmurray does not emphasize the revelation of God in Christ in many of his works and is, therefore, vulnerable to precisely this kind of criticism. See also Dorothy Emmet, “review of PR,” Journal of Theological Studies 13 (1962): 235, for a depiction of Macmurray’s conception with regard to this issue: (1) full human experience is personal, (2) our attitude to the Universe other than ourselves is personal, and (3) the “Other” of the non-human world beyond ourselves must therefore be a Person. This succession appears to portray God as the combination of human relations into a unified whole and Emmet proposes that it is appropriate to depart from a notion of God as “a” Person to a concept in which three “Persons” are related in a mysterious unity.

66 RE, pp. 206–12. Here Macmurray affirms “I do not myself believe that there can be a religion without God, or even that the existence of God can be rationally questioned” (p. 208), but he
priori to human relations or a posterori. Macmurray accentuates the point that our concepts of God are a posterori, human constructions and need to be examined. Therefore, his concept of religion is not a system based on reflective formulations about God; it is a step in the creation of human society in which God is an unseen presence, a universal “Thou” for all persons.

Macmurray consistently holds God and personal relations in tension: one never exists without the other. God is the One who faces us when we reflect on our life as the “something more in our experience which is somehow personal.” Langford concludes that this type of analogy between the human as agent and God as Agent is drawn so closely that one can scarcely tell the difference. However, Macmurray believes the two are distinct, necessarily linked, elements.

He especially avoids a pantheistic view of the world which attempts to apply a “religious colour to the organic concept of the world.” God is personal, individual, “fully theistic” rather than a conglomerate of others’ experiences or merely a functional attribute of the world. Individuals are not organs of the social whole—a corporate personality. God is not a general concept, but has individuality. God is an Agent who acts in the world, leading Macmurray to adopt the Hebrew concept of “God as worker.”

God is the Creator who is original, unlimited, and universal and is not merely a “First Cause or Prime Mover.” God is working continually so that “history is the continued act of God.” God, then, is Agent in the world of action and history.

---

61 RE, p. 228.
62 SRR, p. 34.
63 SA, p. 72. The human tendency is to define God as an object of our knowledge who fits into categories of understanding. Macmurray credits Kant as the one who has shown the error of categorizing an infinite person.
64 SRR p. 34. Macmurray later says, “God is beyond the personal, of course; but it is the personal in our experience which points in the direction of God.” (p. 45, footnote 1)
65 Langford, “Natural Theology,” p. 19. He summarizes Macmurray’s formulation, “there is in the community of men a fullness, an esprit de corps, a more inclusive dimension of experience, which can only be described as “Other.” God, consequently, is defined in terms of the completeness of human relationships.” (p. 15)
66 PR, p. 223.
68 Anderson, HT, p. xx, builds his understanding of God on the concept, viewing God’s actions as God’s being in transcendence—hence, God’s knowability.
69 SRR p. 44; CH, pp. 37, 176.
70 A: ‘OR,’ p. 184; SRR, p. 44.
is God's act.\textsuperscript{77} Hence, God is known through God's acts in human history. Kirk­patrick believes that Macmurray's God is limited and not fully free in determining history due to his "insistence upon the co-creatorship of community (persons and God)" which suggests history is a dialectical interaction where "God seeks cooperation but cannot coerce it without destroying the very freedom which he had made part of the original creation."\textsuperscript{78} However, Macmurray is confident that the will of God ultimately prevails, that human rebellion is self-frustrating, and that such frustration returns individuals to God's purposes. Thus, God's freedom is not limited by humans, but human freedom is constituted by dependence on God.\textsuperscript{79}

God freely acts in personal ways beyond creating, \textit{e.g.}, as judge, confidant, and helper\textsuperscript{80}: the decisive element in God's character is love.

This free, loving God, Macmurray believes, has personality: God is a "personal individuality." By this, he means that God is 1) unique, particular, functioning as an individual (immanent), and 2) inclusive of the other, reciprocal, and acts responsibly in, through, and for others (self-transcendent). Hence, "The immanence and transcendance of God are not mutually exclusive characteristics, but simply the absolute expression, in their necessary reciprocity, of the fundamental nature of all personality."\textsuperscript{81}

Anderson challenges the correlation of Macmurray's description of God's transcendence over the world with a human person's transcendence over an organism because it lacks the real knowledge of God as revealed in God's actions. In this formulation, he argues, God is virtually inaccessible.\textsuperscript{82} However, Macmurray believes that both God's immanence and transcendence are fully personal.\textsuperscript{83} God's transcendence from the world, according to Macmurray, is not separation from the world, but is that of an infinite Agent acting in the world.\textsuperscript{84} As such, it is an

\textsuperscript{77}CH, pp. 92–93. Yet God appears personally distant throughout Macmurray's works.  
\textsuperscript{78}Kirkpatrick, "Toward a Metaphysics of Community," p. 573.  
\textsuperscript{79}PR, p. 222. This is quite different from Barth, where one is dependent on God's personal encounter, whereas for Macmurray, it is dependent on God's will.  
\textsuperscript{80}A:'OR, p. 183. Macmurray asks, "Can prayer be addressed to the impersonal? Can we have fellowship with a tree or a rabbit?" He clearly points to a God who is personally involved with us. On p. 182, he says that God is not a force, the Absolute, life, or the \textit{elan vital}.  
\textsuperscript{81}A:'OR, p. 179.  
\textsuperscript{82}Anderson, \textit{HT}, p. 198.  
\textsuperscript{83}PR, p. 223. See also \textit{SRE}, p. 38. In \textit{A:'OR,} p. 193, he says, "The transcendence of God is His unique individuality; His immanence is His absolute universality; and these are therefore not particular characteristics of Deity, but are fundamental characteristics of all personality carried to their infinite limit."  
\textsuperscript{84}Anderson \textit{HT}, p. 20, footnote 67, refers to a personal conversation where Macmurray confessed he had not worked out transcendence along theological lines, but this would be his conclusion.
external focus and action. Ultimately, this God is to be understood as the One who initiates relationship in acts that create friendship (fulfilled relation) and, therefore, God is a friend.\textsuperscript{85} When Macmurray refers to God as the Father of all humans, it is not in a Trinitarian sense, but as another term for the one who creates and loves the world.\textsuperscript{86}

According to Macmurray, the purpose of God is clear: it is to establish permanent cooperative fellowship between God and humans.\textsuperscript{87} God waits for restoration of broken relationships\textsuperscript{88} and the work of God in human history is for the purpose of redeeming the world from evil in order to set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.\textsuperscript{89} God’s intention is reconciliation\textsuperscript{90} which realizes the full communion of a universal community of persons.\textsuperscript{91} Macmurray’s use of the term reconciliation does not imply dynamic movement of the Trinity—a term which is absent in his works—but is an act of God in human history uniquely linked to the person of Jesus. He affirms that the gospel is about Jesus, that his life and death are for the redemption of the world, and that Christ reveals the nature and purpose of God.\textsuperscript{92}

True religion rests on the presence of God. This, for the Christian,\textsuperscript{93} comes through the presence of the resurrected Jesus in worship. One does not know the nature of God through feelings of awe and self-abasement, nor does one have faith based on an ancient historical claim. One perceives God through Jesus.\textsuperscript{94} Macmurray does not perceive Jesus as a social reformer or a religious teacher, but as one who acts in human history and whose thoughts are important but secondary. However, in their entirety, his acts and thoughts have a reforming effect upon humans. “His

\textsuperscript{85} Anderson, \textit{HT}, p. 205, footnote 54.
\textsuperscript{86} John Macmurray, \textit{Religion, Art and Science} (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961), p. 59. Hereafter \textit{RAS}. See also \textit{PR}, pp. 174–75. Macmurray uses both “Father of all men” and “Creator of the World” in conjunction, as though they were nearly synonymous.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{SRR}, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{CH}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{PR}, pp. 174–75.
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{CH}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{CH}, p. 100. The very fact that Macmurray understands these events as future shows that he denies their actuality fulfilled in Christ.
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{SRR}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{CH}, p. 84. Macmurray identifies himself as one of those “. . . who accept the teaching of Jesus as the revelation of the divine character and the ideal of conduct for man. . . ” and appears to limit his belief to the teachings of Jesus and neglect the revelation in his acts. Elsewhere, Macmurray affirms that it is the \textit{intention} of Jesus that is the crucial element to be understood (p. x). This will be a vital element in my conclusions about Macmurray’s Christology, and hence, his understanding of personhood. Macmurray focuses on the teachings of Christ more than the \textit{person} of Christ.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{SRR}, p. 53.
work consists not in what he told men to do but in what he did to men.\textsuperscript{95}

Although he claims to regard Jesus as more than simply another important historical person, his formulations do not convey the impression that Macmurray believes Jesus is God. Instead, he appears to be a religious genius who mediates between God and humanity, “the Word that expresses . . . the meaning of the religious impulse as it has expressed itself in the creation of community.”\textsuperscript{96} Macmurray credits Jesus with the discovery of the personal nature of human life—a discovery which was a revelation of the essence of all human life, and even of the essence of God.\textsuperscript{97} Through this disclosure, Jesus identified the intention of God for humanity; not what it ought to be, but what it will be.\textsuperscript{98} Hence, Jesus fulfills the role of a prophet, calling people to repentance.\textsuperscript{99} He was sent by God to establish the kingdom of God, not as a Jewish empire, but as a community of humanity.\textsuperscript{100}

One might (and still may) conclude from this that Jesus was simply an enlightened human were it not for Macmurray’s discussion of the incarnation. In Jesus, Macmurray believes the divine is unveiled in history. This added dimension (Jesus as the channel of revelation) does not exclude other descriptions necessarily, but it now seems more plausible that Macmurray might perceive Jesus as divine.\textsuperscript{101} He does not conclusively state that Jesus is God, but proposes as a working hypothesis (not a dogma) that God is incarnate in Christ.\textsuperscript{102} God, incarnate in human personality, bridges a gulf—which the prophets could not—between the personality of the prophet and his/her concept of God. Whereas the prophets declared, “Thus says the Lord,” Jesus could say, “I say unto you.” He did not speak as though he were separate from God, but as One who embodied God.\textsuperscript{103}

Life and nature, then, are understood in the light of Jesus’ personality.\textsuperscript{104} We

\textsuperscript{95}CH, pp. 4–5. See also SRR, p. 36. Which still neglects what he did for humanity.
\textsuperscript{96}RE, pp. 240–41.
\textsuperscript{97}CH, pp. 55–57.
\textsuperscript{98}CH, p. 58. See also John Bowden, The Intention of Jesus (London: SCM, 1945), p. 166. Bowden points out that this intention is not just “good intentions” which Jesus desires humans to fulfill, it is the mark of a person characterized as “wholesouledness.”
\textsuperscript{99}SRR, p. 48; see also CH, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{100}See CS, pp. 62–85 for a more thorough discussion of the meaning of the phrase “kingdom of God.”
\textsuperscript{101}A’OR, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{102}A’OR, pp. 180, 215. See also CH, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{103}A’OR, p. 202. Hence, Anderson’s criticism of Macmurray’s inadequate formulation, which does not have a “concrete and practical dimension of the revelation of God,” appears to neglect this essay. (Anderson, HT, p. 204). This early essay is foundational for Macmurray’s theological epistemology and nearly appears orthodox, although I believe it is still inadequate in its Christology.
\textsuperscript{104}A’OR, p. 207.
perceive the infinite in the finite, through the incarnation of Jesus. Macmurray momentarily appears to lose exactitude when he refers to Jesus as a universal human personality. However, he attempts to rectify this by identifying Jesus as the center of history, both as the fulfillment of the Hebrew expectation and as highly instrumental in the development of the world since. In fulfilling his Messianic role, Jesus culminates the prophetic tradition and releases it from its limited national reference, extending salvation to the whole world through the Jews. Thus, Jesus is one who lives for others, concerned for those outside of himself. He is self-transcendent to the degree that he is universally transcendent. This does not mean that Jesus loses his individuality. In fact, it is on this basis that he establishes it. The more one loses oneself in love for others, the more individually human and personal one becomes. The life of self-sacrificing love is most fully realized in Jesus.

Jesus reasserted love as the basis of all human relationships and of all human community. His mission was to inaugurate the kingdom of God and fulfill humanity as a universal family. However, according to Macmurray, this requires human willingness to accept divine purpose and to cooperate with God. In spite of this contingency, God is able to establish this kingdom which Macmurray identifies with the apocalyptic element in Jesus' preaching as an "inevitability of achievement."

Apocalypse concerns this world and what happens at its end with the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Therefore, Jesus' teaching was not merely ethical, relevant to the historical present. Such an understanding represents a dualism between theory and action, between present and future. But, as in science, both theoretical (ethic) and predictive (apocalyptic) elements are necessary constituents.

---

106 A.'OR; p. 180.
107 A.'OR; p. 180. Macmurray states that "it may be conceivable that pre-Christian history may be finally understood only with reference to the type of Christian civilization in which it reaches its culmination and fulfillment." Macmurray views Jesus as the culmination of Jewish prophecy (CH, p. 42).
108 A.'OR; p. 180. Elsewhere, he describes Jesus as the source of Christianity and claims that western civilization is indebted to Christianity for its development (CH, p. 42).
109 CH, p. 42.
112 CS, pp. 67–85.
113 CH, p. 53.
114 CH, p. 84.
but truth is realized when the predictive is fulfilled by testing the theory. Hence, Jesus acted out his theory so as to fulfill the kingdom.\textsuperscript{115}

Macmurray substantiates this view by citing the fact that when Jesus taught, he spoke in the indicative mood (what is and will be) and rarely used the imperative (ought).\textsuperscript{116} What Jesus teaches is “an integral understanding of life,” not an ethic of rules. An ethic, of itself, is a law to be obeyed or an ideal to be followed. Jesus brought a gospel: good news of the fulfillment of God’s purposes.\textsuperscript{117} Hence, Jesus was neither a moralist (teaching law) nor a mystic (teaching an ideal). Rather he offered insight into human life and foresaw the fulfillment of personal relations in the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{118}

Jesus’ life and death were significant in their role of preparing a people to change the world. Macmurray contends that Jesus understood that, having trained his disciples, he must bring about his own destruction in order that the nucleus he prepared could fulfill his work. In a final challenge to the ruling classes, Jesus chose the Passover to raise an affront to hierarchy and initiate its conclusion in his death, leaving his disciples to fulfill the kingdom.\textsuperscript{119} This is certainly not orthodox Christian theology and is an interpretation which ignores the supernatural. Macmurray notes that his omission of reference to the resurrection is due to his strict focus in the historical field. However, he concludes that “Jesus Christ lives in us and in the world, manifesting the nature of the God we worship and working through us to create the fullness of the kingdom of God on earth.”\textsuperscript{120} Jesus’ disciples, then, were not merely witnesses of the kingdom, but “first citizens” who lived according to the intention of Jesus.\textsuperscript{121}

Macmurray believes all knowledge of God must come through historical experience (especially in Christ) which “becomes a progressive revelation of the nature and purpose of God.”\textsuperscript{122} Those forms of “modern theology” which reject revelation in their interpretation of history have stepped outside of religious discussion. True religious knowledge must come through the “empirical phenomena of personal relations.” Macmurray cites Jesus’ statement, “He that hath seen me

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{115}{\textit{CH}, p. 87. This raises the question as to how completely Macmurray begins with practical reason.}
\footnotetext{116}{\textit{CH}, pp. 88–89.}
\footnotetext{117}{\textit{CH}, p. 90.}
\footnotetext{118}{\textit{CH}, p. 92.}
\footnotetext{119}{\textit{CS}, pp. 86–89.}
\footnotetext{120}{\textit{SRR}, pp. 52–53.}
\footnotetext{121}{\textit{CH}, p. x.}
\footnotetext{122}{\textit{CH}, p. 40.}
\end{footnotes}
hath seen the Father," as the summary of this formulation of empirically necessitated knowledge. Only the true revelation of God in this world can bring a fulfilled community and he is convinced that "Christianity which remained true to the revelation of God contained in its own Gospel could achieve the purpose which Communism seeks to achieve through its rejection of religion, more easily, more certainly, and with fuller understanding of the real issues which are involved." Hence, it is only when true belief in the revelation of God exists that there arises the possibility of a fulfilled humanity which lives in freedom.

Macmurray refers to the Spirit of God (presumably the Holy Spirit) as one who guides the Christian church in establishing the community. It appears from this reference that Macmurray recognizes the ongoing nature of divine involvement in this task. The Spirit guides humanity in creating community. This has apparently escaped Anderson, who commends Macmurray's discussion of the basic communal form of human existence, but criticizes his neglect of the divine dimension in creating this community. Anderson believes we must be confronted by the revelation of God if we are to achieve community. Aided by the power of God's Spirit, the "form of the personal" becomes the "form of the Spirit." Unfortunately, Macmurray somewhat imprecisely discusses the nature of the Holy Spirit's work of confronting and guiding us. However, at the very least, it can be said that he regards the Spirit as one who necessarily must be active in creating community. Hence, the Spirit is involved in fulfilling human existence and embodies specific, divine involvement.

Contrary to what might be expected, Macmurray's religious anthropology offers an epistemology which is not based on mere observation. Utilizing a religious apperception, he avoids dualism and recognizes the unified, relational nature of the world (including the estrangement between God and humanity). Though God created the world and humanity good, both exist in a fallen state marked by alienation. Actual human behavior (estranged isolation) does not reflect its real nature (in relation). Therefore, scientific method cannot properly arrive at an anthropology which reflects the relational (real) nature created by God. "The doctrine of the Fall involves the conclusion that man's actual behavior provides no clue to his real nature, or at least that his real nature cannot be discovered through an induction

---

123RE, p. 210. He describes the way a really religious person defines the nature of God, implying that a religious person may define God in terms of the analysis of ideas or transcendental beliefs whereas the really religious person relies on the facts of this world—including the life of Jesus.
124CS, p. 28. This depends, of course, on the reality and practicality of Christian beliefs.
125SRR, pp. 66, 76.
126Anderson, HT, p. 205.
based on observation of his actual ways of behavior.\textsuperscript{127} According to Macmurray, human nature is based on God’s good intention and Jesus’ discovery of his human nature is a discovery of God’s intention, “embodied in the existence of human nature.”\textsuperscript{128} God does not intend that multiple individuals should populate the earth, but that persons exist in free community. Achievement of such community, then, is the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. When this occurs, humanity will have been restored according to its original nature. According to Macmurray, to deny the intention of God is to deny one’s own nature and to refuse to be human.\textsuperscript{129}

Humans are made in the image of God and Macmurray believes this means they are given the freedom to create and seek to realize their own intentions. However, humans are also sinful and choose to live in personal conflict with God, opposing God’s intention and destroying community.\textsuperscript{130} The result of sin is isolation and estrangement\textsuperscript{131} and in its present condition, the world is in a state of enmity which directly contradicts God’s desire.\textsuperscript{132} The problem of evil arises from a conflict of wills: God’s intention and humanity’s oppose each other and communion is destroyed.\textsuperscript{133} “Thus, the existence of enmity between human beings is the essence of sin. It is a negation of community and is, therefore, the self-negation of human life, the denial by man of the intention of God which determines the course of human history.”\textsuperscript{134} Thus, Jesus equates hate with murder and Macmurray believes this condemnation of anger is because it negates relations and destroys individuals. The consequences of sin—neutralized isolation in the place of peaceful community—require forgiveness if persons are to be restored to friendship. Hence, Macmurray understands a major task of religion to be “the search for means of overcoming sin and achieving reconciliation.”\textsuperscript{135}

The truly religious person lives by a faith which is neither coerced nor blithely accepted. Faith is a relation with the world and other persons which requires the whole of a person’s being and expresses itself in “a flood of spontaneous and joyful activity.”\textsuperscript{136} Faith must align with reason and, as such, be a scientific attitude.

\textsuperscript{127}CH, pp. 35–36. 
\textsuperscript{128}CH, p. 58. 
\textsuperscript{129}CH, p. 59. 
\textsuperscript{130}SRR, p. 45. 
\textsuperscript{131}CS, p. 110. 
\textsuperscript{132}CH, p. 37. 
\textsuperscript{133}SRR, pp. 44–45. 
\textsuperscript{134}CH, p. 68. 
\textsuperscript{135}SRE, pp. 72–73. 
\textsuperscript{136}FMW, pp. 26–27. Macmurray cites three necessary elements of faith:

1. It must be credible.
whereby we accede that our knowledge is not absolute, but is only an accumulation of our well-grounded beliefs. It faces ignorance with an attitude of courage. Macmurray believes fear to be the opposite of faith. Living with worry and despair in anticipation of danger is alien to the presence of faith, which is akin to freedom in that it acts in the world to fulfill the intention of God, "to co-operate with Christ in the redemption of the world." Faith, then, is confident, joyful response, not mere opinion. Hence, Macmurray asks whether one is a Christian because one believes the teachings of Jesus, or because one participates in activities which have historic continuity with the original community of faith. He concludes that the latter is the case, though he affirms that Christ's teachings are important because they instruct us in a "way of acting upon life for its transformation." The task of renewing the world, rather than that of passing on religious information, is the continuation of Christianity. God's intention is that persons experience wholeness and fulfillment through restored relations and within these limits, humans live as free, creative agents. Actions which are outside of God's intention are self-frustrating, not because God intervenes, but because they oppose God and intend the impossible (reality operates according to the intention of God). True human freedom, then, occurs when human activities correspond with the purposes of God so as to facilitate "the realization by Man of his true nature in the world."

2. It must make direct and obvious contact with the circumstances of our daily life.
3. It must draw on the current of our emotional life and release it in a flood of spontaneous and joyful activity.


139 A:'BK,' p. 39. Here, it becomes evident that both faith and freedom are based on human capacity. He does not propose Christ as One on behalf of the many, but as cooperating with the many.

140 CH, pp. 4–5.
141 CH, p. 5.
142 SRR, p. 44.
143 CH, p. 95.
144 CH, p. 96. Fulfilling his/her capacity.
It is evident, then, that religious involvement with God requires human consent and that receipt of the benefits of God is conditioned by response. It appears that Macmurray does not affirm a gospel of unmerited grace. Rather, he portrays God as a good Creator, who in the face of alienation offers a restored fellowship, but requires humans to do their part in meeting God as co-partners in restoring communion such that “Salvation lies in discovering and willing the intention inherent to his nature, as part of the world, bringing him into harmony with the reality in which he has his being.”

In this paradigm, salvation has not been completed in Christ: it is made possible by living life with him. Macmurray presents a gospel that calls one to a life with Christ that is not based on what he has done, but on the fulfillment of our human nature by participation with him in his act in the world. More discussion on this aspect of Macmurray’s assertions will be forthcoming in chapter eight. Note that despite its conditional implications, Macmurray’s formulation identifies salvation as relation oriented rather than proposition oriented. One must be in relationship with Jesus, not just follow his teachings. He points out that Christ’s answer to the question “What shall I believe?” is “Believe in Me.” To the question “What shall I do?” he answers, “Follow Me.” The church’s mission, then, is not to spread Christian doctrine but to say, “Believe in Christ, follow Christ.” It cannot offer an ethic, only an attitude of love based in Christ.

What, then, is the place of worship in the church and in fulfilling personhood? Worship is participation in ceremony for the purpose of celebrating one’s partnership in and dependence upon the community. As a member, one stands with all the members in relation to the Person “Who is at once the Father of all men and the Creator of the world.” If Hoffman’s interpretation of Macmurray is correct, that “Man’s first act is to worship,” and that the fall is a change in the object of worship, then worship refers to our being in communion with others, including God. The acts that we share in, when we come together as community, symbolically refer beyond themselves and “Religion is the celebration of communion.” According to Macmurray, whenever humans celebrate their fellowship, it is communion—whether it be two friends, a family celebrating a birthday, or Holy Communion.

---

145 SRR, p. 46.
146 CH, p. 52. Contra Barth.
147 CH, p. 82.
148 C-PS?, p. 428.
149 C-PS?, p. 432.
150 RAS, pp. 58–59.
152 PR, p. 162.
in a Christian cathedral or village chapel. He alludes to baptism as a means of extending the principle of community beyond the limits of natural (biological) borders in an adoption which incorporates a person and gives that person a sense of kinship. It is not enough for people to be regarded as members of the community, it is through an act that a person feels and believes him/herself to belong. Macmurray says, "He must be reborn, as it were, into the inner unity of the group." When Langford concludes that Macmurray "does not point toward a worshipping conclusion," he has neglected to note all that Macmurray proposes in building and celebrating the Kingdom of God. Macmurray's religion is not merely the worship of God in a removed sense, it must be personal knowledge of God or it is imaginary. Worship is participation in a life of communion.

Macmurray believes that among the world's religions, Christianity approximates the intention of God most closely because it is concerned with relations between persons. Since the time of Jesus, Christianity has been "the motive force behind the development of our civilization," continuing the intent of God through its actions in history.

Christianity is not a totally new phenomenon in history: it is the fulfillment of the Hebrew religion. Macmurray, as noted, believed this was the one truly religious culture in history because it was based on allegiance to the one true God and intended the universal unity of all persons. The Jews were a chosen community, an instrument to bring about the redemption of the world, and "[Judaism] exists, not for itself, but for the world." As such, the Jewish history is the revelation of the intention of God and is a praeparatio evangelica which anticipates the coming of Christ, who would inaugurate the Kingdom. Unfortunately, the Hebrew

153 CC, p. 25. These events appear to be equally religious. Peter Fink, "The Challenge of God's Koinonia," Worship 59 (1985): 401, states that a major reason for enacting the Lord's Supper is to fulfill the intention of religion to create fellowship. Communion is a celebration in hope and anticipation, not a remembrance of Christ's death.

154 CC, p. 37.


156 RE, p. 183.

157 CC, p. 20.

158 CH, p. ix.

159 CH, p. 15.

160 CH, p. 16.

161 SRR, p. 37.

162 SRR, pp. 46-47.

163 CH, p. 103.

religion did not achieve its task of bringing the world to worship God despite its several, inadequate attempts to do so.

Whereas the priests promoted a *legal* religion which reached the world through universal law and sacrificed the personal dimension of religion,\(^{165}\) the prophets promoted a *personal* religion which centered on the person of God, to whom all persons owe their allegiance.\(^{166}\) However, despite this personal focus, they failed to nourish a real religion. Their failure resulted from a gradual shift away from concrete life experiences to an ideal conception of the future world, fostered by a desire to instill hope in the Jewish people. Because of this dualism, the prophetic element spawned an unreal, ideal religion.\(^{167}\)

From its inception, Christianity was a personal religion which called persons into fellowship with God rather than a system of truths about other worlds. As it developed, the theoretical element permeated Christianity stripping it of its purpose to fulfill God’s intention. Macmurray asserts that Christianity is not intended to establish doctrine but to discover truth in a scientific manner. Hypotheses about reality, rather than dogma, must be central to Christianity.\(^{168}\) Persons of faith test the truth and appeal to practical activity for vindication, holding “fast to that which is good.”\(^{169}\)

A properly scientific attitude, Macmurray affirms, is the central principle of Christianity\(^{170}\) and at the most, persons can formulate only an undogmatic theology\(^{171}\) which is derived from the most suitable hypotheses, not definitive doctrines. Kirkpatrick believes that Macmurray was “never an orthodox Christian (at least as orthodoxy was defined by Barthianism in the 40s and 50s);”\(^{172}\) however, his undogmatic method is very similar to Barth’s dogmatic method of scientific self-examination, though they obviously arrive at different conclusions.

Christianity’s mission, then, is not to build a self-serving structure: it is to serve the world.\(^{173}\) It is inherently missionary-minded as a co-partner with God.

---

\(^{165}\) *A·OR*, pp. 195–96.

\(^{166}\) *A·OR*, p. 197.


\(^{168}\) *A·OR*, p. 203; *C-PS?*, pp. 432–33.

\(^{169}\) *A·BK*, pp. 40–41. See also *PR*, p. 223, where Macmurray says, “Religious doctrines are as problematic as scientific theories and require like them a constant revision and a continual verification in action.”

\(^{170}\) *A·BK*, pp. 40–42. Macmurray believes that modern experimental science has its source in Christianity.

\(^{171}\) *SRR*, p. 72.

\(^{172}\) Kirkpatrick, “Toward a Metaphysic of Community,” p. 571.

\(^{173}\) *SRR*, pp. 64–65. Hence, Christianity should not be overly concerned for the individual worshipper,
in building a universal community.\textsuperscript{174} This task necessitates the rejection of all forms of racism in a revolutionary manner in order to respond to human needs and to create a new humanity.\textsuperscript{175} Thus, the church plays a prophetic role, summoning humanity\textsuperscript{176} (through persons, not ideas or institutions)\textsuperscript{177} to return to the divine intention. Therefore, the church must become ecumenical: a reunited witness to the true nature of religion.\textsuperscript{178}

Religion is inherent in primitive society\textsuperscript{179} in that it forms the basis of tribal communities, kinship groups. As such, religion is originally an organic, biological connection rather than an intentioned will to form a family. It is the organic nature of community which forms a natural barrier to those outside of the blood line.\textsuperscript{180} In this context, the gods were imaged from observations of the natural world. Primitive peoples attributed each natural element to a personal source or considered the world itself to be personal. Either conception was derived from an anthropomorphic projection.

Macmurray contends that all forms of pseudo-religion build on this kind of projection and fail to distinguish between what is true and what is projected onto reality. Such religions are illusory\textsuperscript{181} and he notes, with anxiety, the effect that inadequate religious models have in inhibiting the original intention of religion. If one rejects true religion, one is forced to choose between either 1) the notion that religion is "a primitive dream world of anthropomorphisms, an illusion of human self centeredness," or 2) to give it an independent place in the life of the spirit, abandoning objectivity and viewing it as a product of human intuition with an inward focus.\textsuperscript{182} Whether projecting or intuiting, primacy of human thought replaces the reality of the Other. Sigmund Freud challenged illusory apperceptions, although he did not complete his critique in a scientific manner so as to determine what real religion might be.\textsuperscript{183}

Various religions have attempted to fulfill the intention of creating a world

\textsuperscript{174}\textit{CS}, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{175}\textit{CC}, pp. 41-44. Macmurray appeals to Paul's statement, "In Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free."
\textsuperscript{176}\textit{CH}, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{177}\textit{SRR}, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{178}\textit{RAS}, pp. 76-77.
\textsuperscript{179}\textit{CH}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{180}\textit{CS}, pp. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{181}\textit{CS}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{182}\textit{A.'OR'}, p. 213.
\textsuperscript{183}\textit{PR}, pp. 151-52.
community, but have pursued their task incorrectly and thus became pseudo-religions. Islam, according to Macmurray, attempts to create a world community by force. Unfortunately, the means destroy the end. The result is not a religious community based on love: it is a form of societal bondage. It is unreal in that it represents the world as a field of physical force, where the best and strongest has God's blessing. Macmurray believes this is "idealized materialism" which glorifies the practical use of power and neglects the personal dimension on which true religion is based.

Buddhism attempts to establish community by denying the reality of the material world so that conflict and disunity are resolved by the creation of an ideal community in another realm. Such substitution of the ideal, spiritualized world in place of the real merely results in an illusion of reality. Macmurray labels this approach "idealized spirituality" because it finds reality in the spiritual world of imagination. Such an escape from reality can never bring people into dynamic relations.

Christianity, Macmurray acknowledges, is not without failures either. It becomes pagan when it aims for spiritual security rather than searching for truth. It has done this in several ways. 1) Dualistic forms follow the Greek apperception, replacing practice with theory. They are concerned with truth statements about God. 2) Idealistic forms build on Platonic thought, focusing on the primary reality of the spiritual realm. 3) Pragmatic forms, clearly identified in the church's acceptance of the Roman empire, involve the church in spiritual politics, giving societal control priority over personal fulfillment. I believe Macmurray also identifies a fourth pseudo-religion, religious atheism. Influenced by Schleiermacher, whom Macmurray labels "the Father of Modern Theology," modern conceptions of God and the institution of religion are completely based in the subjective mind of the individual. According to Schleiermacher, claims to objectivity lay beyond religion and are "a phantasy of the child-life of humanity." Conversely, denial of the personhood of God, is an assertion of such atheism. These four forms of aberrant Christianity subsume the personal and adopt the theoretical, ideal, political, or subjective in its stead. Hence, though they are religious in nature, they are not real...
because they deny interactive engagement with God and the world.

Though communism does not claim to be a religion, it reflects a religious character in its attempts to build a world community. Marx's criticism of religion was only partially correct. He deemed religion to be ideal, a device that suppressed the dissatisfaction of the masses by distracting them from present struggles with promises of a better life in a future world. However, Macmurray believes, true religion is essentially concerned with this world and, for this reason, he is quite willing to rid religion of its idealism for the purpose of facilitating human relations. 

Communism has recaptured the ability to live in the world wholistically with its intention of building a "real, universal brotherhood of mankind based on equality and freedom," but it fails to affirm the love-life of humans, addressing, instead, the "species-life" of humanity (primarily focusing on its "hunger-life"). Macmurray contends that merely feeding the masses cannot create community. Love must integrate human society. Love cannot be separated from meeting material needs. Historically, however, this seems to be the case. Christianity has focused on love whereas communism has focused on material needs. Therefore, such dualistic approaches which exclude one or the other, can only be described as inadequate. Macmurray favors Christianity as the hope of the future because it affirms the reality of a personal God who is the basis of the personal nature of reality.

When Macmurray enters the field of theology (contra his claim to engage in a philosophy of religion), he relies on natural theology. The danger is immediately evidenced in his assessment that "The real religion from which [beliefs] are derived, lies in the depths of one's own being; its development is a development of one's own being." His definition of natural theology is "a theology which is based on our common human experience of the world, and which requires no help from special experiences of a peculiarly religious kind. It must be discovered by reason alone, without the need to have recourse to faith." He notes the challenge of the theology of crisis—which stresses the complete otherness of God and leads theologians and philosophers alike to the conclusion that "any knowledge we may have of the divine must be revealed to us in 'religious' experiences whose validity is evidenced by an inner conviction of their authenticity in those to whom they are granted." This defines the philosopher as an atheist.
(despite philosophy’s theist roots) in an age of little faith. However, Macmurray does not adhere to this system because he believes that the religious element is present in humanity throughout history and any search for truth necessarily must account for this.

Somewhat paradoxically (in view of his commencement with natural theology), he affirms that the universe is personal and that God is the ultimate personal reality: the Creator, Sustainer, and Perfector of the world. Theological reflection, then, must (scientifically) affirm that which is real—including God. Throughout his works, he appeals to the Bible as an authoritative source that reveals truth and is essential for the (correct) interpretation of God’s world. Thus, he grounds his theology in the reality of God revealed in Christ and witnessed to in the Bible. From this platform, he summons humanity into a life of communion with God and one another. We may conclude with West that, in fact, Macmurray’s enterprise is best described as “faith seeking understanding.” Macmurray affirms the role of revelation in our knowledge of God, and acknowledges that we are concerned with a God who acts, so that “his natural theology is then a posterori, theology rationally discerned.”

Whereas Barth holds the God-human theological dialogue together, Macmurray focuses on the human side. Barth distrusts natural theology because it masks human projection; Macmurray distrusts supernatural theology because it also masks human projection. Both are suspicious of human truth-claims. I believe it is presumptuous to suppose, as Gunton suggests, that Macmurray proceeds from a trinitarian theology. But certainly he is in earnest search of truth which has its source in God.

2.2 Human Personal Existence

Having discussed the human and divine contexts in which persons exist, I will now examine Macmurray’s understanding of personal subsistence within these contexts.

197 PR, p. 224.
198 Charles C. West, “Review of PR,” in International Review of Missions, 53 (1964): 222. But we must admit obvious errors and confusion, especially with his Christology and pneumatology and his neglect in discussing the Trinity.
2.2.1 The Development of Personhood

When speaking of persons, it is a common, but inadequate, conception that one merely refers to an individual of the class *homo sapien*. To do so is to refer to the individual as an object which belongs to an identifiable group. In other words, such is a scientific classification. Traditional definitions of the human as a rational animal focus only on the organic form of the human, noting a distinctive characteristic: rationality. However, Macmurray rejects the notion of rationality as the capacity to think. He proposes, instead, that rationality is the capacity for objectivity—the ability to stand in relation to that “Other” which is *consciously apprehended* as not ourselves. This conscious relation to the personal Other is the capacity for personhood. Elsewhere, Macmurray identifies the “capacity for objectivity” as the capacity to love objectively.

Personhood must be conceived as moving beyond organic analogies. Aristotelian theory portrays the baby as an animal organism, a potential person, who develops rationality and acquires human personality. Macmurray disagrees with this model and proposes, instead, a new one, enlisting the contribution of Dr. Ian Suttie, who believed that an infant is more like a human adult than an animal. According to Suttie, the infant already has the human element primal to personal connectedness: it is the innate propensity to love. Personhood, then, is not an element added to the maturing child, but it is already present as a personal “response-ability.”

Moving beyond a priori organic analogies to the field of the personal does not imply that one disregards the organic element in the human. “The concept of ‘a person’ is inclusive of the concept of ‘an organism,’ as the concept of ‘an organism’ is inclusive of ‘a material body.’” But the person must not be reduced to these

---

203 *PR*, p. 38.
204 *IU*, p. 127.
205 *IU*, p. 128. He notes that our dreams are a form of consciousness which is not objective, but is a recognition of the actual state of affairs. In both states, dreaming and waking, we are conscious; however, it is only in waking that we are truly connected with what is outside of ourselves (pp. 129–30).
206 *RE*, p. 32. “The capacity to love objectively is the capacity which makes us persons. It is the ultimate source of our capacity to behave in terms of object. It is the core of rationality.”
207 *PR*, p. 45.
209 *SA*, p. 117. See also Kirkpatrick, “Toward a Metaphysic of Community,” p. 579, where he states, “The form of the personal is a model of relationship which recognizes both a mechanical, material dimension in persons (that part of a person which can legitimately be understood in terms
parts; rather, the person is an inclusive whole. Componential studies which focus on parts of the human are abstract and seduce the observer to view the human as a complex organism, an aggregate of elements when, in fact, persons are whole, living beings.

The term personhood applies to what all humans share in common: a bodily existence with a fulfilled capacity for interrelation with other persons. It is this capacity which actually constitutes our personal nature and distinguishes us from the rest of the animal kingdom. Mutuality of relations is uniquely applicable to humans so that all persons are defined by their connectedness with other persons. The specific relations into which a person is born (and which are later developed) shape the individual personality and distinguish that particular person from other persons.\textsuperscript{210}

Initially, one possesses personal capacities\textsuperscript{211} that are not mere potentialities, but are actual personhood. Like an adult, a baby is dependent on the Other for its being and exist only because of its personal environment. The infant is not only capable of movement and biological existence, it is "made to be taken care of, to be taught, to be loved, born into a relationship already personal."\textsuperscript{212} Despite the infant's lack of rational awareness of what is happening, it is conscious of some "other" who meets its needs. This conscious transcendence, which encounters another reciprocally self-transcendent person, is the beginning of the development of personality.

In the process of integrating with the existing personal matrix, a child interprets his/her experiences in the light of others' experiences (predecessors and peers). These are fused into the child's sense of being as a compounding connectedness with the Other. At any stage of life, a person is a person due to this mutual experience of the Other, not by virtue of developmental skills (such as talking). One cannot logically ask, "Am I the same person now that I was as a child?"\textsuperscript{213} because a person is not so only at a moment in time such that two moments can be compared. Persons exist as unabridged, complex, interconnected agents over a whole history. Personal individuality changes constantly as we oscillate in our relations, but we remain the same person.

\textsuperscript{210}PR, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{212}White, "Theology as Philosophy," p. 461. See also SA, pp. 48–49.
\textsuperscript{213}PR, p. 107.
Our elemental personal context is the family. It is the original human community and the source of all subsequent communities, the fulfilled state of human existence.\footnote{PR, p. 155.} Whereas some understand the family to be a biological link which must be maintained by societal conventions, Macmurray believes "It is established and maintained by natural affection; by a positive motive of its members."\footnote{PR, p. 156.} Family is not an impersonal structure, a means of bringing order to society; it is the context and source for our personal development.\footnote{PR, p. 156.}

Within the family, the original unit of personal existence is that of mother and child.\footnote{PR, pp. 62-63.} The role of mothering can be taken by male or female, so long as that person actively cares for the child.\footnote{PR, p. 50.} Anderson prefers to describe this role as "parenting" so as to remove biological overtones and focus on the social role which can be filled by different people.\footnote{PR, p. 75, where he states, "the term mother has not an organic, but a personal denotation. It refers to the adult person who cares for the baby."} Shutte expands on Macmurray's use of the term "mother," identifying it as a symbol for "the personal milieu of persons" and depicting the involved parent as the contact point whereby the field of the personal is made present to the infant. The child stands for "the natural possibility of personal existence" and so represents the "pure natural capacity for being an agent," as one created to receive personal interaction, maturing through responsive exchange. Whether or not Macmurray regards a child as a full person is difficult to decide, though he would certainly concur with Anderson that childhood is "a core of human life that endures as a quality of personal freedom and openness."\footnote{PR, pp. 47-48. An animal instinct is described as a "specific adaptation to environment which does not require to be learned."}

What Macmurray initially affirms about an infant is its helplessness. In distinction from animals (who have instincts for survival), the new-born is completely dependent on the parent.\footnote{PR, p. 67-68.} "All purposive human behavior has to be learned," occurring as a process of adaptation. Paradoxically, the first stage is that of adaptation to being unadapted, whereby the child completely desires and responds to the
love relationship that is offered by the adult.\textsuperscript{225} Whereas an animal instinctively adapts to its natural environment, the infant emerges into a personal environment which initiates relation to the receptive (not passive) child. The child experiences consciousness, primarily of needs, and seeks fulfillment from the other who responds when cried for or smiled at. Response to needs results in the experience of fulfillment as comfort (\textit{i.e.}, full stomach, warmth, attention) and the responsive act of smiling and gurgling. Unmet needs stimulate a response of crying, which the adult must interpret in order to restore the sense of satisfaction. Through such interaction, the child learns that it is valued and loved. Anderson affirms that the "first aspect of the role of parenting is to recognize and affirm the humanity of the child,"\textsuperscript{226} expressed through the daily attention of caring. The activity of the parent is based, not merely on meeting physical needs, but on caring for a person of worth. A machine can perform the task of feeding whereas only a person can express love. At a very early age, an infant cries because it is lonely and the mere appearance of a person is enough to return the child to a state of satisfaction.\textsuperscript{227} Shutte believes that it is through this continuing attentiveness of the parent that the child discovers itself and acquires self-conscious awareness of itself as the object of parental activity.\textsuperscript{228} It is this necessary helplessness of a child which instigates the original need for the "Other" and enables the immature dependence to become mature interdependence. We cannot focus on some individual capacity which develops into an egocentric independence, because one is never a person in isolation and the attempt to isolate a person from relationships is, in fact, destructive of healthy individual existence.

In the parent-child relation, we also find the origins of causality or agency. It begins in the role of a parent who fulfills the intention of a child on that child's behalf. The motive (hunger) proceeds from the child, but the parent fulfills the intention (feeding). As White says, "The child lives through the intentionality of the mother, a life in common with the mother."\textsuperscript{229} The parent wishes development of the child and so allows the child to develop skills in order to fulfill its own intention. Hence, there is a mutuality of development as the parent and the child each fulfill the intention of the child. The parent's involvement decreases while the child's increases. Shutte labels this a "dialectic of development" in which the mother confirms the status of the child as a person.\textsuperscript{230}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotenumber{225} PR, p. 48.
\footnotenumber{226} Anderson, \textit{BF}, p. 66.
\footnotenumber{227} PR, p. 49.
\footnotenumber{228} Shutte, "What Makes Us Persons?" p. 75.
\footnotenumber{229} White, "Theology as Philosophy," p. 461.
\footnotenumber{230} Shutte, "What Makes Us Persons?" p. 76.
\end{footnotes}
In its proper function, the inclinations of a mother’s love (caring while preparing for independence) and the inclination of a child’s personal nature (developing a sense of belonging while becoming self-responsible) coincide so that a “mutuality of satisfaction” results as the two affirm their connectedness and ground their individual existence as personal beings. A child’s independence is always relative because a child is dependent on the parent and the personal nexus for personal being. Through the acquisition of social skills, the child learns to cooperate with others and interfaces with an ever-broadening network of support, eventually achieving maturity through the ability to act as an agent who exercises and fulfills self-intention and motivation.

*Motive* is linked to conscious awareness of comfort and discomfort; from this framework of conscious awareness one responds to stimuli. Behavior is based on motive and is a selected response to the Other. So, persons who do not act reflect a lack of motives and consciousness of the world. Although a baby’s movements initially appear to be random, they soon develop order and direction. However, a child continues to depend on the parents for the learning of skillful behavior in order to fulfill self-intention adequately.

In the development of skills, a child must learn to discriminate, first between colors and shapes, then sounds, before proceeding to sense-perception (learning to correlate sight and touch). Through this process, the child continually acquires skills which become habits and are employed automatically. Each new skill contributes to further skill development and maturity in the personal nexus. Human habits, that is consciously learned responses to the environmental stimuli, take the place of animal instincts, which are unlearned responses. Play, then, is not a meaningless recreational pastime: it provides an opportunity for this development of skills. “The young imitate in play the necessary activities of maturity; so that their play is a way of learning adult skills.”

Equally important in the process of learning is the development of imagination. This basic reflective skill is derived from activity in the world whereby one forms images in the mind (based on all the senses) and coordinates them in the refinement of reflective skills.

Macmurray concludes that human development is not random, but is based on

---

232 PR, pp. 51–52.
233 PR, pp. 52–53.
234 PR, p. 54.
235 PR, p. 55.
236 PR, p. 56.
a motivating consciousness: the feeling of comfort and discomfort in the infant, from which develop love and fear.\textsuperscript{237} He hopes to prove that thinking is part of skill development, derived from and, hence, unified with our experience of the world. Habits—learned responses to stimuli—are also part of this developed internal dimension. This unity of the internal dimension with the external world, he believes, eradicates dualism.

Macmurray resists the temptation to describe the development of a child as merely a more complex version of animal development by reemphasizing the role of the mother as the one who introduces the \textit{personal mode of existence} and prepares the child for a place in the personal community.\textsuperscript{238} This preparation is a cooperative process in which the child gains insight from the foresight, judgement, and action of an adult. The child learns behaviors and attitudes appropriate for mutual life with others. This learned coordination with others who submit to the conventions of society, distinguishes humans from animals who act by impulse and instinct.

Essential to this integration with humanity is "the capacity to enter into \textit{reciprocal communication} with others."\textsuperscript{239} This is not merely the capacity for expression, but is also the capacity to understand and to participate in mutual interaction. According to Macmurray, the infant is naturally endowed with an ability to communicate with other humans—initially, in the form of a cry of distress.\textsuperscript{240} Through this essential communication process, the infant acquires primary knowledge of the world. Anderson argues that this communication is beyond that of mere physical need; it is a way of loving and of knowing others.\textsuperscript{241} Macmurray believes that "[t]o know another person we must be in communication with him, and communication is a two-way process. To be in communication is to have something in common. Knowledge of other people is simply the negative or reflective aspect of our personal relations with them."\textsuperscript{242}

The child comes to know the adult intimately in the processing of recognizing the continual contact and provision of the other who expresses affection. In response, an infant reflectively perceives that this other is a significant, dynamic element of the world. A child need not wait until verbal skills are mastered to know this significant other: such knowledge comes through shared life. Hence,  

\textsuperscript{237}\textit{PR}, p. 57. Macmurray describes this discrimination between positive and negative phases in consciousness as basic to our being, whereas that distinguishing between a feeling of pain, sickness, and hunger, is a learned distinction.

\textsuperscript{238}\textit{PR}, pp. 58–59.

\textsuperscript{239}\textit{PR}, p. 60.

\textsuperscript{240}\textit{PR}, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{241} Anderson, \textit{BF}, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{242}\textit{PR}, p. 169.
Macmurray affirms that throughout life “people do not get to know one another by discussing their relation to one another, but by discussing other things.” \(^{243}\) In the employment of speech, one progresses beyond proximal activity to communication and, hence, to interconnectedness. Communication requires a “you” to listen (to complete the transaction by reception of the expression) and to fulfill mutual existence in relation. A child learns to speak because he/she is spoken to. Speech is a gift which enables personhood; it is an invitation to fulfill the capacity for which that child was created: personal communion. This does not diminish the value of deaf or hearing impaired persons, who require alternative forms of interaction. Rather, it affirms the essential nature of communication as the fulfillment of personhood. It is not mere convenience: it is a necessity.

In dialogue, humans surpass mere animal needs (food, warmth, protection), as they are motivated to be caring persons. This is specifically seen in the dynamic interaction between parent and child: both function with original motivation. The adult loves the child and cares for that child’s welfare; the child desires the comfort of the adult and fears abandonment. \(^{244}\) The poles of human existence, love and fear, ultimately provide the motivation for human community.

In the process of interaction between baby and mother, memories are established of mother as the one who responds to cries. With memory, comes the expectation of repeated response in similar situations. \(^{245}\) Herein lies the beginning of knowledge of the Other, and it is in this process that the child is interwoven into the personal nexus. Macmurray labels this pattern of cries and response the “rhythm of withdrawal and return,” \(^{246}\) through which the child perceives the Other and has immediate experience of the personal dimension—the starting point of all knowledge. “If we did not know that there are other persons we could know literally nothing, not even that we ourselves existed.” \(^{247}\) Having discerned the Other, the child finds him/herself completed by this Other, touching and communicating in the concrete world. The child finds a “you” to complete the “you and I” of

\(^{243}\) SRE, p. 79.

\(^{244}\) PR, p. 62.

\(^{245}\) PR, p. 76. We will need to later pursue this “memory and expectation” of the other in relation to John Zizioulas, “Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood,” SJT 28 (1975): 412–13. Hereafter ‘HCHI.’ He illustrates “presence in absence” which I believe is merely a contemporary focus on one of whom you have both a memory and an anticipation in such a way that the other becomes “present.”

\(^{246}\) PR, p. 76. See also PR, chapter four, “The Rhythm of Withdrawal and Return,” pp. 86–105. A more thorough discussion of this topic is forthcoming in the next section with regard to how this process relates to the self as agent.

\(^{247}\) PR, p. 76.
human existence.

The first "you" is usually the primary caregiver, a correlate of the self as "I." The process of distinguishing between "you" and "I" continues until the child perceives the community of persons of which that child is a member. At the same time, the child learns to separate the non-personal from the personal as that which does not respond to its call, which supports and resists it, and which is a means to action (like a tool), the material stuff which can be formed or used to satisfy organic needs.  

The world, which begins as entirely personal, is gradually depersonalized as elements are separated into inanimate status and objects are classified within the complex material whole. Hence, we say we know something when we have classified it within our reflective system of thought. In contrast, personal knowledge comes only when we have entered into reciprocal relations.

What remains is the organic aspect of reality, which Macmurray acknowledges is difficult to classify, a distinct field for further study in his system. He avers that no organism is capable of caring for us "in the practical ways in which we must be cared for if we are to survive and mature as persons." Hence, organisms belong to another field of study.

Having considered the discrimination of the Other, Macmurray notes the danger of conceiving of the self as a removed observer because it creates a dualism of subject and object. If, however, we have gained insight from the development of the child, we can note that the self and the Other are inseparable correlates. The child exists as a part of that which is discriminated as personal, organic, and material. Eventually, the child discriminates these aspects within himself/herself. 

There is one world to know, and humans know it as they are part of it, not as separated from it.

The child must learn that he/she is a person, not by virtue of capacity for thought or speech, nor even because he/she is a particular biological organism; personhood is such but because of dynamic involvement with other persons. Hence, Anderson states, "The second aspect of the role of parenting is to create and sustain the personal life of the child." The parent affirms and disciplines the child in such a way that all activity is integrated, facilitating a life of harmony with others and others.

---

248 PR, pp. 80–82.
249 PR, p. 83. Most reflective thinking is dualistic and classifies entities as material or mental, contrasting between persons or things. Such division describes the organic in terms of categories drawn either from the personal or material fields.
250 PR, p. 84.
251 PR, p. 86.
252 Anderson, BF, p. 68.
creative involvement with the human community. Discipline, in this sense, is the foundation for the interdependence of cooperative living.253

The child develops personal individuality by acquiring a history of the self within the context of loving, guiding care.254 If the child is to realize a fulfilled sense of personhood, it will be through a history of belonging and feeling unconditionally valued as a person. Given the opportunity to develop responsibility within the community of persons, the child continually expands the personal field. Entering into new relations and sharing in the common purpose of building friendship is not a means to some other end, but is an end in itself. It is natural for humans to share life together, finding joy and satisfaction in one another.255

2.2.2 The Self as Agent

Though Macmurray began the Form of the Personal by examining the self as agent, he understood this method to be abstract, focusing attention on individual existence. Throughout, he clearly believed that fulfilled personhood can only be described as a dynamic involvement with other persons and the world. In this section, the self will be discussed as an agent, not forgetting the priority of a person’s relational constitution, and will focus on the distinctives of a singular person.

Macmurray described the agency of the human in terms of the capacity to act in the world, knowing the Other as distinct from self. Throughout The Self as Agent, he referred ahead to the second volume, Persons in Relation, as a more accurate description of the nature of personhood. The first volume defined the isolated individual by the phrase “I do,” including one’s act and knowledge of the act. The second volume outlined the person as having existence by virtue of the active involvement in a matrix of personal relations in the world. This could be characterized by the phrase “I interact with,” and includes the “doing” of the individual as well as mutual personal relations. For Macmurray, we are persons through our capacity to participate with the Other (both persons and world). The person in the second volume is more accurately described as the “self as participant.”

In The World

As human beings, we develop through our ability to act in fulfilling our intentions and, hence, have purposeful movement in the world, especially toward other

252RE, pp. 89–91. Macmurray lists eight principles which apply to the early discipline of personality.
254Anderson, BF, pp. 68–69.
255RE, pp. 97–98.
persons. In fact, Macmurray says, "To exist means to be in dynamic interrelation with other existents." We cannot assert that the mere fact of our capacity for movement completely describes agency; we must include awareness of the world—intentional, practical involvement, and reflection on our actions. We know the world through immediate experience, not as a static "other" but as the "Real." It is a complex of continuous change which we first discriminate through contact and then secondarily reflect upon.

Though we view the world with some idea of continuance (unaltering) upon which we base our natural laws, this is an incomplete picture of the world. It remains incomplete even if we allow for continual patterns of change because it is an abstract understanding of the world which focuses only on material and organic elements and neglects the personal, intentional dimension of the world. Such a perspective treats the world as non-agent and ourselves as detached observers who can construct "laws" of nature because it is consistent.

However, we are not separate from the world. We are essentially a part of it. Being in the world does not make us agents, but the world does provide the possibility for our actions. Hence, we must understand this Other, which we are part of, as a context for our self-understanding. If we limit our description of the Other as "Continuant" (rather than Agent), we will focus on the material aspect of the world (the result of cause and effects) and will conceive of ourselves as material, a system of physical energy. This limited and abstract understanding of the world accounts only for events which result from some cause and not for intentional action.

Change can be either an act or an event. Both refer to something beyond observation, to a source—either the thing or person responsible. If the origin is a person, we refer to an "act" and look for a reason. ("Who did this, and why did he/she do it?") If the source is a non-agent, we refer to an event and look for the cause or the stimulus. ("What caused this?") The norm of human experience is to act intentionally in the world, though experiences can occur without intention (i.e., falling). Agency is our distinctly personal involvement in the world.

---

256 PR, p. 64.
257 SA, p. 174.
258 See Shutte, "What Makes us Persons?" pp. 69–70, for discussion which illustrates the complex dimensions of personal agency.
259 SA, p. 188.
260 SA, pp. 154–58.
261 SA, p. 144. See also p. 173, "The 'material world,' for example, is an abstraction from the actual world in which we act.”
262 SA, p. 144.
We may describe the world as organic (a complex of stimulus and reaction) and ourselves as more advanced organisms in the world which is a developing, natural process. This, however, is a world of adaptation where events randomly progress in an unpurposed direction.\(^\text{263}\)

A more complete view of the world conceives of ourselves as agents. It understands the world as personal (a world of action and interaction), where personal activities are known through personal knowledge. Knowledge of the world comes through personal immediate experience, and thus theories of world and self must consider the personal at a fundamental level. A personal view of the world cannot disregard the material and organic elements; they are contained within it, though often incorrectly described as distinct—a result of attention which is limited to specific elements within a complex world.

### Bipolar Existence

As agents in the world, there are two poles in the single human experience, which Macmurray refers to as “negative” and “positive.” The positive pole is conscious movement in the world, awareness of the Other in primary contact. The negative pole is derived from activity and experienced as reflective images in the mind. Macmurray has been criticized for his use of the term “negative” because he uses the same term to articulate a number of other concepts.\(^\text{264}\) Here he refers to an inward image, a reflection on one’s experience of the world, and uses the terms “memory,” “mental constructions,” and “imagination.” Only things in the world have real existence. That which is in the mind is idea: a reflection of the practical contained within a person.

Mathematical formulas cannot illustrate this relation because mathematically, a positive and negative represent two distinct elements so that the sum of \(+a \) and \(-a\) is always zero.\(^\text{265}\) Organic illustrations are no better because negative and positive in these models represent successive phases of a dialectical relation of thesis and antithesis, so that one cannot hold to the unity of the self having a positive and negative pole at the same time. An organic view cannot conceive of a person as

\(^{263}\)SA, p. 148.

\(^{264}\)This diverse use of the term has caused confusion in understanding its use here. At times, he describes the world as negative to the self: it offers resistance to our touch. Here, he refers to all that stands in opposition to touch. Occasionally, he describes actions as negative (referring to the element of fear or destructiveness in human relations). Elsewhere, he speaks of movement in a negative direction, as a pendulum which has negative and positive successive phases (SA, p. 155). See also Emmet, “Review of SA,” p. 412, and “Review of PR,” p. 233, and Ferré, “Review of PR,” p. 287.

\(^{265}\)SA, p. 96.
a synthesis of act and knowledge of the act whereby the act is the thesis and the
knowledge is the antithesis. If knowledge follows action then action is without
knowledge and is, hence, unintentional and non-personal—a mere event of which
one observes after the fact. However, the self as agent is a personal unity capable
of concurrently knowing the world and inwardly creating mental images.

Without the negative pole, one could have no memory, hence, no capacity for
apperception or intention fulfilled in action. Therefore, one would be unable to act
in the world and, hence, not be an agent. From this perspective, Macmurray can
state, "A self, we have said, is a being that exists through self-negation." A

A person relies on the capacity for reflection in order to exist in the world. But
if we conceive of the self primarily as this "inner self," we have abandoned the
reality from which we acquired our knowledge. "In reflection we isolate ourselves
from dynamic relations with the Other; we withdraw into ourselves, adopting
the attitude of spectators, not of participants." Being agents in the world is a
positive (outward activity) which contains and is constituted by the negative (inward
activity). Hedman refers to this as a "contrapletion," two poles opposing each
other, while at the same time fulfilling one another. This "contrapletal dialectic"

266 SA, pp. 96-97.
267 A camera illustrates the human situation. The object focused upon is the real thing. When a
picture is taken, a negative is created which is not the object, but is an image based upon the real
object. From the negative, one can repeatedly reproduce proofs, re-presentations of the object,
based on a prior encounter with the object and retained for future reference. I propose that
Macmurray conceives of looking and acting in the world as analogous to taking pictures. We
acquire a complex negative which not only contains the visual image, but all that the senses record
(memory). "Negatives" can be developed at any time as we bring them up for consideration. Our
presentation of the pictures can be "edited" to aid further involvement in the world, beginning with
mere recognition and later being compiled into a complex reference system.

The activity of the "camera" is apperception in the positive pole of personal existence. The
recollection or re-presentation (negatives, pictures, photo albums, etc.) is the negative pole. A
human without sense perception could not be conscious of the world, nor could he/she have a
memory, and hence, would be dead (missing not only the film, but the whole camera). If one
"loses one's memory" (the film), only part of the "negative" is lost in that usually the person retains
some things (such as the ability to interact with others). Memory is not the whole of the negative
pole of self existence. Even the knowledge that one is acting is a function of the negative pole.
The picture illustration is extremely limited in its application, but it does clarify Macmurray's use
of the "negative" in the discussion of agency.

268 SA, p. 104.
269 PR, p. 16.
270 Pride Hedman, Psychotherapeutic and Philosophical-Theological Concepts of Responsibility: A
Critical Evaluation (Abo, Finland: Institutionen For Paktisk Theologi Vid Abo Akademi, 1975),
p. 78.
271 Ralph Tyler Flewelling, "Contrapletes," in Dictionary of Philosophy, 1 Vol., ed. by Dagobert D.
allows us to conceive of the self as a unity, fully in contact with, and active in, the world, and yet autonomous, with a sense of self-consciousness, as two cooperating functions of the same person. 272

Despite his use of the terms negative and positive, Macmurray desires to reject dualistic thought. He perceives these two poles as two directions of focus within the same agent. Focusing on the practical world, one intends certain activities. In reflection, a person gives attention in thought to some element of mind, memory, or world without activity. One must remember that Macmurray holds the two elements in tension for the purpose of providing a basis for knowing other persons. The self is known through the acts and self-revelation of a person.

**Personal Experience**

A unified, bipolar agent necessarily experiences the Other because this Other is the context of activity. We cannot address our existence without reference to our immediate experience of the world. Macmurray states, “The immediacy of an experience consists simply in the fact that we are immersed in it, that we are living in it, and not setting ourselves over against it, as something other than us which we can contemplate and study.” 273 In our experience, the Other is conceived as a unified whole in which we are participants. We do not simply “know” the world; we are personally involved in it. Knowledge is only one element in our experience of it. 274

Sense perception is foundational to knowledge of the world; “it constitutes a ‘given’ for both thought and action.” 275 But it is only through our activity in the world that our senses operate. Through our sensory awareness, we experience the phenomenon of contact with that which is other than ourselves. 276 We do not merely receive impressions from the world; we are active in knowing it through our senses. 277

Because contact with the Other is first through the tactual senses, they have a priority in this knowledge of the world. In fact, by touching the Other, we first discover that we are distinct from the Other. 278 Through tactually doing something

---

274 *IU*, p. 21.
275 *SA*, p. 66.
276 *SA*, p. 104.
277 *SA*, p. 122.
278 *SA*, p. 107.
279 *SA*, pp. 122–23.
to the Other, I become aware that there is something that resists my touch. It is important to note that only through touch do we have immediate awareness of the world. This view contradicts others which prioritize vision over touch. Macmurray believes that vision is mediate, requiring light, and is subject to illusion. He argues that a blind person knows the world through other means of discrimination, but the idea of someone existing without tactual awareness is nearly unthinkable.

Macmurray identifies the “core of tactual perception” as the experience of resistance. Resistance is the Other meeting me—whether in the form of a wall or a gale force wind—in such a way as to frustrate my will. Through this resistance, we know that the Other exists, but not what it is. It is simply that which stands in opposition to me. Unfortunately, Macmurray refers to this opposition as “negation” of the self (a different concept from the inward pole of our personhood). It refers to that which limits our existence, which “moves against us in the negative direction.” Once we grasp the dynamic correlativity of the self and the Other, discriminated by their opposition, we have a simple description of what constitutes the unity of experience. The experience of resistance necessitates action as a support; it sustains action by resisting us, similar to the manner in which a wall which supports us when we lean against it by offering resistance to our pressure. Resistance allows for the possibility of freedom, not merely to choose any action, but as the ground of our ability to encounter and interrelate with the Other. We do not interrelate only as material objects or organisms in space, but as persons who can know one another in a world of shared action.

From the time of birth, the world is personal in the form of mother and family. In subsequent development, one learns to discriminate those elements of the world which are non-personal. Hence, the initial experience of resistance and support in the world is of the personal Other and only the language of mutual relations can adequately reflect this contact with the Other. Though one materially and organically contacts the Other as that which meets one, it is only persons who intentionally interact. Intentional, shared activity affirms mutual personhood. Isolated reflection without personal interaction leads to the loss of one’s capacity for freedom because real freedom can only be experienced in real contact.

\[279 SA, p. 111.\]
\[280 SA, pp. 107-08.\]
\[281 SA, p. 108.\]
\[282 SA, pp. 108-09.\]
\[283 SA, p. 109.\]
\[284 SA, p. 109.\]
\[285 PR, pp. 91-92.\]
\[286 SA, p. 142.\]
In our contact with the Other, the experience of feeling is an awareness of our own internal state. Macmurray believes feeling is not merely a perception of the world, but it is touch which causes a sensation in my skin and is part of my general coenesthesia. Feeling provides the motive for action (e.g., pain causes a movement toward relief), but is not merely reflexive reaction to stimuli. As mentioned before, an infant has two basic motives: satisfaction and dissatisfaction (also described as comfort and discomfort, pain and pleasure)—from which other motives develop. In a given situation, our awareness of the world causes us to experience feelings of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If we are dissatisfied with the situation, we are motivated to act in such a way that we change the situation to meet our needs. Once we are satisfied, we terminate our action. Feeling, then, selects the direction of response to a given situation. As we discriminate the Other in our experience, our feelings govern how we will expend our energy. If we feel pain, we use energy to move away. Thus, tactual sensation is a mode of awareness which provides us with the necessary feelings and motives for a range of possible actions. Although this primarily focuses on the organic level, our personal involvement is one of feelings (such as love and fear) whereby we choose appropriate action.

In the experience of feelings, we are involved in valuation. Feelings lead us to make a choice within a range of possibilities. Implicit in such a choice is the acceptance of one and the rejection of others. One is evaluated as “right” for the situation and others, in varying degrees, as “wrong” for the situation. Hence, in a coherent moment, a person apprehends the world, feels a response, discriminates a range of possible actions, values one action over another, and fulfills an intention in action. Action, then, is not mere organic activity; it is distinguished by knowledge of the Other, intention, and valuing reciprocal interaction. Organisms have motives (responses to stimuli), but only persons have intentions.

In the fulfillment of intentions through activity, visual awareness is of secondary importance. It is an indirect and mediated perception of the world whose main purpose is to guide our (tactual) activity of the world. Through visual awareness, we anticipate our contact with objects and persons. We receive information about

---

287 SA, p. 113.
288 SA, p. 190.
289 SA, p. 197.
290 SA, p. 124.
291 SA, pp. 190-91.
292 SA, p. 197.
293 SA, p. 111.
where we can walk and where there are obstacles. We can distinguish, from a
distance, the options for activity in several directions. When we visually apprehend
the world, we are not engaged in action, but are able to orient ourselves in relation
to persons and activities which are part of real existence. This orientation enables
us to act, to change the world and, hence, determine what it will be.

Of note is the fact that visual experience is symbolic. It is the formation of
images in one's mind upon which reflective experience is based. These images
are accurate only as they correlate with our tactual experience of them. They are
not imaginary, in the same way that a graven image is not imaginary, but is a
concrete object, and is perceived as such. An image in the mirror is not imagined;
however, the image in our mind, reproduced with our eyes closed, is imagined and
has no concrete reality, but even mental images exist because we have sensually
experienced the world. The images in the mind are a re-presentation derived from
the original presentation of the world through the tacit dimension.

**Consciousness**

Beyond our experience of the world, we are conscious of both world and self.
This is the knowing element within action. This basic motive-consciousness is
an awareness of the world with respect to our satisfaction or dissatisfaction in
a situation. At this level, the consciousness is organic—an internal response to
stimuli in our environment. Consciousness is not separate from action, but is
integrated with body movements and, in some sense, determines them. This
awareness of the Other (seeing, touching, hearing) and of ourselves (remembering,
thinking, anticipating) is bipolar. We live objectively in the world, "living in and
through that which is not ourselves," and when we withdraw our attention from
the world into our reflective consciousness, we shed objectivity and reflect into the
subject.

Our primary dependence as persons is on the Other. We exist with Other-
consciousness and the reflective self has meaning only in relation to this Other. The
secondary self-consciousness is aware of the inward, "negative" aspect of personal
relations. In the primary mode of consciousness, I focus on another person and
enter into fellowship. The secondary mode, if sustained, separates me from the
Other. This introduces constraint (I fear the other and potential negative valuation
of me). Hence, self-consciousness is often identified as a synonym for shyness.
It inhibits freedom in personal relations, causing relations to be maintained by

---

294SA, pp. 113–14.
295RE, p. 218.
an effort of the will. Other-consciousness facilitates proper conscious behavior with respect to other persons in that it creates an openness on the part of the agent, facilitating interaction with others.

Conscious behavior can be identified at three levels, each successive level encompassing the previous:

1. The behavior of an inorganic object can only be identified as the effect of a cause.
2. The behavior of an organic entity is effected by a cause, but is more complex in that it reacts to the stimulus in order to adapt to a situation.
3. Personal behavior more properly is called action, though it is responsive to situations in that it is the realization of intention to change the situation.

Such is not merely an adaptation, but is a rational determination of the right (moral) action that will achieve the communion for which humans are created.

Emotions, which develop from our original motives of comfort and discomfort, are part of our consciousness. When we feel comfort, we feel cared for and loved. When we feel discomfort, we feel abandonment and concern or fear. This emotive consciousness (capacity for awareness) is grounded in, and developed through, our responses to other persons in the cycles of feeling cared for or abandoned. These motives are instrumental in determining not only reactions, but intentions. Hence, Macmurray says, “Every action has a motive.” Motives govern the expenditure of our energy by selecting a specific direction for action. From the original poles of comfort and discomfort, we develop a whole system of motives upon which we base our choices.

Simply put, the poles of response can be apperceived as negative or positive, the Other demanding an action with or against it. Positive engagement with the Other provides the motivation for a life of mutual involvement. Macmurray identifies this positive apperception as “communal.” If one perceives the Other as acting negatively toward the self one responds either with submission or aggression. The prior is the “contemplative” form of apperception and the later is the “pragmatic”

297 SA, p. 119.
298 PR, p. 87.
299 SA, p. 195.
300 SA, p. 196.
301 PR, p. 111.
form. Macmurray believes these three categories of apperception are *a priori* motives, that is, necessary dispositions to our actions, "which determine the general form of all our existence." Each of these means of interaction is based on our perception, on real engagement with the Other.

Emotions are objective in that they refer to the objective reality of another person. They become irrational when they become reflective and no longer are aligned to the actions of the other person. This is true, not only of emotions, but of thought. We apprehend the world through emotive apperceptions and then reflectively organize this experience in the mind. Hence, all thought is based on emotional involvement in the world. This is the basis of Macmurray's statement, "The development of human nature in its concrete livingness is, in fact, the development of emotional reason."

Reason develops in the emotional life by the employment of the sensual capacities in the world, not by isolated exercises in the mind. If we have an improper emotional attitude toward another (not grounded in reality), we cannot have a "reasonable" attitude toward them. Only in an attitude of love and trust can we possibly have a reasonable relation with another; all conclusions about other persons, drawn in isolation are irrational because they are projections rather than resulting from real encounter. According to Macmurray, real emotions and thought are essential conditions for fulfilled mutual relations and for freedom. However, real emotions and thought are incomplete if not expressed in action. "Consequently it is in action that the full nature of personality is revealed, and in particular in the springs of action, the dynamic motives, which determine our conduct."

This discussion of motives would be incomplete without the mention of the two basic poles of human motive, namely, love and fear. These are the developed forms of the infant's experiences of comfort and discomfort. Macmurray states, "As personal motives they are general, pervasive and permanent, determining the dynamic pattern of character, in contrast to the organic impulses, which are intermittent and successive."

---

302 PR, pp. 111–12.
303 PR, p. 112.
305 RE, p. 50.
308 CF, p. 78.
Hence, the communal apperception is a fulfillment of the love motive; contemplative and pragmatic apperceptions are based on fear and cause either withdrawal or aggression. Of the two motives, "the capacity to love objectively is the capacity which makes us persons."309 Reflection, when pursued extensively, annuls our personhood because it corrodes communion with others who are necessary for our existence and establishes fear in consequence of our separation. This is why "love is, as a matter of fact, the basis of all human community."310 Love alone motivates us to engage with others, to focus outside of ourselves, and to think accurately about the world. By focusing us on the Other, love is the source of objectivity.311

In addition to love (positive motivation) and fear (negative motivation), Macmurray proposes that another original motive, hate, arises from the frustration of love. He identifies it as original because it is a component in all relations; however, he classes it as derivative in that it operates when fear frustrates love.312 This obviously becomes an obstacle to friendship, as does fear, destroying the possibility of freedom. Only as consciousness is grounded in reality and is motivated by love can it be characterized as fully personal. Any other approach frustrates the capacity for relations which makes us persons.

Reflection

As I have noted, in consciousness we are aware of both the world (positive) and of our "inner" self (negative). In reflection, we focus attention on the negative pole and withdraw from action and the world. This reflection is re-presentation of that which has been presented to us in experience.313 As such, it is abstract and non-existent in the material world—it is an idea.314 An idea is symbolic: "it is something present which takes the place of what is absent and is considered not for itself but for its reference to another."315 Reflection takes the form of words or images which we retain in our memory and from which we select relevant combinations on which to focus our attention, as data relates to pertinent situations.316 From these mental constructions, we form reflective judgments, all of which are hypothetical and have

309 RE, p. 32.
310 CH, p. 67.
311 Anderson, HT, pp. 49–50.
312 PR, p. 73.
313 SA, pp. 175–76, 185.
314 SA, p. 173.
315 SA, p. 185.
316 SA, p. 174.
a degree of uncertainty to them which must be verified in experience.\textsuperscript{317}

In our minds, we interpret our experience of the world and construct the necessary organization of data to inform our actions as to the best course to pursue. We are removed spectators of the world, space, and time creating images in our minds, drawing upon memory, and preparing for action. Hence, "The basic reflective skill, on which the others depend, is imagination; the formation, definition and coordination of images, especially visual and auditory images."\textsuperscript{318}

The ability to focus inwardly does not imply that there are two selves; rather, there is one self with two poles of reference. "The self that reflects and the self that acts is the same self; action and thought are contrasted modes of its activity. But it does not follow that they have equal status in the being of the self. In thinking the mind alone is active. In acting the body indeed is active, but also the mind."\textsuperscript{319}

Reflection focuses in two directions: the past (memory) and the future (anticipation).\textsuperscript{320} Memory is a collection of the data derived from empirical practical experience.\textsuperscript{321} As such, it is an awareness of past actions that have become matter of fact. Memory re-presents to us an inadequate fragment of our knowledge derived from action; it contains only what was "noticed" and can be re-selected as an image for current contemplation.\textsuperscript{322} It is the "given" for all our reflection. As such, "Memory is the \textit{sine qua non} of personal existence."\textsuperscript{323} Present actions are those which create a specific past. In the "knowing" part of our "doing," we choose one action over a range of other possibilities and make the past the field of actuality.\textsuperscript{324} Hence, Macmurray says, "Knowledge, then, in its primary form, is the theoretical determination of the past in action."\textsuperscript{325} The present is our point of action, which, like time, is irreversible when it becomes the determined past. The future is the field of possibility, where actions are yet to be carried out and intentions can be realized.

Thought occurs in the present moment of conscious action, in which we draw upon past memories with the intention of affecting a change in the future. "Pure thought" cannot be separated from existence: it is thought only with reference to reality. Thought is "secondary, derivative and negative; a concept formed by

\textsuperscript{317} SA, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{318} PR, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{319} SA, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{320} SA, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{321} SA, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{322} SA, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{323} SA, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{324} SA, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{325} SA, p. 135.
exclusion, and therefore relative to what is excluded. It involves a constructive process of symbolization, selecting, combining, and attending to what has been done. It brings the derived knowledge to bear on what will be done, inferring from what has been known, the premises for appropriate action in the present. Thought is not limited to our individual memory. We can utilize recorded history and the revealed history of other persons. "Thought, therefore, is never the activity of an artificially isolated individual. The individual thinker is necessarily the member of a particular community at a particular point in the development of history. His thinking is historically conditioned. All thought is in a very real sense communal thought." Thus, the act of thinking occurs in relation to others. Thought arises from, and refers to, what is beyond us. "Real" thinking enables us to align ourselves with the truth and sets us free.

Macmurray proposes that there are two primary modes of reflection: the emotional and the intellectual. The emotional mode is based on the positive pole and begins in sense perception. It is internalized in activity through our feelings. In reflection, the emotional mode moves toward particularization. It seeks a specific representation in the mind of an object in the world and values a thing represented as an end in itself. One contemplates a specific sight, sound, or smell for its individual uniqueness, as a thing of beauty without reference to its use value. Hence, "what is felt to be satisfactory is enjoyed for its own sake." The reflected image is illustrated most clearly in the world of art, where a particular representation of the world is valued for its own worth. Macmurray deems this emotional mode of reflection to be the truly objective approach because it values the object itself in its particularity. The emotional mode is primary in that it is based on immediate contact with the world; in reflection it contemplates the world as an end in itself, not as a means for the use of the subject.

The intellectual mode of reflection also begins with the world as a matter of fact, but as a means to an end. Hence, when it represents the world, it attempts to perceive general patterns in the nature of things, categorizing and producing

---

326 SA, p. 88.
327 SA, p. 93.
328 IU, p. 155.
329 CF, pp. 76–77.
331 SA, pp. 198–99.
332 SA, p. 199.
333 SA, p. 201.
334 SA, p. 198.
formulae about the object of knowledge. Its aim is to achieve generalized information about the world for utilitarian purposes. This is the task of science.\textsuperscript{335} It begins by knowing the particular thing experienced in the world and then generalizes information into a system. Thus, Macmurray avers, “the intellectual mode of reflection is derivative from the emotional and is contained within it.”\textsuperscript{336} Though it begins by observation of the object, its ultimate concern is its use for the subject (the scientist), leading Macmurray to identify this mode as subjective.\textsuperscript{337} He has unified the emotional and intellectual modes as two different functions of reflection and has shifted the emphasis of attention from intellect to emotion as our primary means of knowing the world, establishing that the education of our emotions is a priority—if we are to accurately apprehend the world, know other persons, and experience freedom as we actively love others and fulfill free personhood.

These modes of reflection, in conjunction with our experience in, and consciousness of, the situation we are in become the “reason” for our action.\textsuperscript{338} They provide the premises from which we can act in a particular direction to fulfill an intention. We make a choice because we are consciously aware of our situation and draw upon our reflective abilities to actualize one of the possibilities before us.\textsuperscript{339} Knowledge is not separate from choice and act. We may reflect on what we will do and theorize regarding the outcome of various choices (“deciding”), but choice is the doing of the act.

**Action**

Action is the realization of a possibility through making a choice.\textsuperscript{340} Macmurray points out that, in light of this, “I do” is incomplete. He proposes “I do this” as the element of specificity which characterizes the unique choice that one does make in acting, instead of some other unchosen possibility.\textsuperscript{341}

However, there may be no choice with intention. One may have a motive, but not actually fulfill it in intention. For example, a baby who is hungry (motive-dissatisfied) requires the caregiver to fulfill his/her intention by acting to satisfy the hunger. Intention “implies a knowledge determining action.”\textsuperscript{342} This knowledge

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
335 & SA, p. 198. \\
336 & SA, p. 200. \\
337 & SA, p. 201. \\
338 & SA, p. 151. \\
339 & SA, p. 139. \\
340 & SA, p. 142. \\
341 & SA, p. 165. \\
342 & SA, p. 152. \\
\end{tabular}
\end{footnotesize}
is conscious, where motives are unconscious, felt responses. Intention perceives
the present, but is moved by anticipation, an awareness of the future. It is not
certain about what will happen, but is a practical attitude of expectation, exploring
what act might satisfy one’s motives, not theoretically, but actively.

Intentions are not occasional occurrences; they are implicit in all the activity of
life. “Man lives by intention; that is his nature.” What we refer to as maturity is a
person becoming fully capable of realizing self-intentions in a responsible manner.

For the fulfillment of community, there must be an intention of its members
to be involved in fulfilling the love motive which is the basis of community. However, people often live by fear, masking themselves protectively and “putting on an act” so that we never know the person and are unable to fulfill our intention to commum with them. One’s intentions offer no guarantee; they can only purpose an end with the hope of fulfillment.

One is not born with intentions; they are learned in the “rhythm of withdrawal
and return.” The rhythm begins at infancy with an awareness of the other who comes
and interacts as the positive phase. When the other goes away, the memory of their
presence creates an expectation of their return. This is the negative phase. This
rhythm of positive and negative phases becomes a dynamic tension in the infant’s
mind between attention and expectation. Eventually the child understands itself in
relation to the other who withdraws and returns.

The caregiver progressively requires greater independence of the child so
that the child progressively learns to exercise full agency, fulfilling its motives
through its own intention rather than depending on the adult to return and fulfill
the motive. This does not teach the child to be an isolated individual—the withdrawal of the adult is an act of love which allows the child to become intentionally integrated with the personal matrix through the exercise of this response-ability. The caregiver’s activity encourages the child to be fully human. Macmurray could be referring to God’s loving intervention, when he refers to the reconciling affect of the return phase, saying, “the child can only be rescued from his despair by the grace of the mother; a revelation of her continued love and care which convinces

343 SA, pp. 194–95.
344 SA, p. 69.
345 CH, p. 82.
346 PR, p. 160.
347 PR, p. 169.
348 PR, p. 87.
him that his fears are groundless. Convinced of this love, the child gains confidence that the caregiver can be trusted to return. In the times of absence, the child can imagine the return of the parent and predict eventual satisfaction and comfort. In order for the child to mature, these predictions in hope, waiting to be verified, must lead the child to learn to trust beliefs about the world as hypotheses. The constant attention of the caregiver, which gives the impression that the Other is consistent, must give way to real thinking. The child learns to recognize the changing nature of the world.

In this process, the child learns a life of cooperation, first with parent, then family, and finally society, sharing trust and affection—which (hopefully) diminishes the fear of abandonment.

Throughout our lives, we are involved in the rhythm of withdrawal and return, not merely coming and going in our relations, but vacillating our attention from awareness of the Other to an awareness of self in reflection. Macmurray illustrates this with the example of an artist who paints, actively moving and interacting with the canvas (which resists the artist), and then contemplating what has been done. Action and reflection become so commonplace that we are not aware of them as distinct phases, yet it is characteristic of our whole personal existence. The reflective phase has meaning only as it refers to the positive phase of activity. Within this dynamic interchange, we each develop our own individuality, but maintain the essential unity of persons in relation.

In action, we are never isolated from the Other. We experience an awareness of other persons and the world with whom we must correlate our activity. In personal interaction, we do not merely perceive the Other as image, we have a valuation (a response of feelings) of the Other and of what our intention should be toward it, which determines our actions. From the “pattern of feelings which constitute our motives,” learned through past responses, we express ourselves in action controlled by our intentions. By this, we hope to modify the Other, changing the situation to satisfy us. Whether we intend to erect a building, communicate our love, or discipline a child, we hope to change effectively our situation. In reflection, we modify our representation of the Other; in action we fulfill possibilities and

350 PR, p. 90.
351 PR, pp. 89–90.
352 PR, p. 101.
353 SA, p. 181.
354 PR, p. 91.
355 SA, p. 197.
356 SA, p. 197.
simultaneously increase our reflective knowledge, since the knowledge of the act is included as a negative within the positive.357

The key point to note about action is that it is a practical relation to the Other. “To act is to realize intention, but it is also to enter into relation with the Other.”358 The type of activity one enters into will vary, depending on the capacities of both the agent and the Other in the situation. But a constant motivation, such as love, is behind all the varying actions. We must remember that the “entering into relation” does not assume that the agent existed in empty space prior to this meeting because “the agent and social relations are twin-born and the agent can only exist as a member of the ‘You and I’.”359 The unity of the self, then, includes the Other as a constituent part. One not only has contact with, but is interrelated with the Other.360

The agent, then, is a personal individuality by virtue of the fact that he/she has progressively differentiated him/herself within the field of the personal.361 In his later works, Macmurray referred to this particular aspect of the human as “personality,”362 a term which he unfortunately had used in his earlier works as synonymous with what he later called “personhood” in its full relational sense.363 It is best to understand personhood as that which we all share and personality as our unique character. The individual’s “character is defined, within this complex set of relations as the persistent system of motives from which one acts under normal conditions,” determining the general direction of actions.364

Conclusion

Within the field of the personal, there are individual personalities who are fully personal only through their connectedness with other persons. They manifest a developed character through their actions and reveal their prevailing apperception of the world. From their self-revelation, we can ascertain whether they understand their own nature as persons, intentionally participating in community, or deny their nature by exercising a pervasive individualism. If they live properly connected with the personal matrix, they are persons who exercise responsibility, interacting

357SA, p. 178.
358PR, p. 113.
359Hedman, Concepts of Responsibility, p. 327.
361PR, p. 91.
362PR, p. 25.
363See A: ‘OR,’ pp. 185, 191; IU, pp. 132–34, 156; RE, p. 223.
364SA, p. 198.
in appropriate self-transcendence.\textsuperscript{365}

A telephone illustrates Macmurray’s rejection of the isolated self as definitive of personhood. Those who understand the self as “Thinker” essentially view the phone as the working internal elements of an individual unit, the mechanical parts that make it “work.” But the receiver and mouthpiece, elements necessary for proper use, are lacking. The phone functionally receives calls, but the messages are unable to transcend the circuit board. The incoming signal stays within the system disconnected from the intended recipient of the call. By proposing that the self is agent, Macmurray points out that in order to be complete, one needs the entire unit, with the capacity to send and to receive communication. It is only a functional phone in its capacity for interaction with others. Even this is incomplete, for one phone alone is not enough to fulfill the proper operation of what a phone is intended to do. A phone system is required for the individual unit to have a fulfilled purpose. The phone has its full meaning only in relation to other phones. The essence of the phone (circuits) or the phone in isolation (unit) are component parts of the whole, but are abstracted parts which have no meaning without the whole network.

2.2.3 Heterocentric Existence

Macmurray conceives personhood, then, as a term descriptive of the fulfilled capacity to be constitutionally interconnected with a network of other like beings. His thesis in the \textit{Form of the Personal} is that the self has its being in personal relations.\textsuperscript{366} This insight is key to all his works—the problems of human society or individual life stem from a violation of this personal nature.\textsuperscript{367}

God endows humans with a capacity for communion, which is fulfilled by entering into free and equal relations.\textsuperscript{368} “Entering” does not imply that we exist outside of our relations and then choose to enter in to them. Rather, it means that we live in light of what we already are, integrating with community because that is the source of our personal nature and the support of our personality.

No one can exist as a person in isolation. We require at least one other person to complete the complex “you and I.”\textsuperscript{369} While this may be minimally represented by two, Macmurray affirms the larger “field of the personal.” Here, there is a mutually positive relatedness, each finding the center of interest and value in the other, yet

\textsuperscript{365}A: ‘OR,’ pp. 191–93.
\textsuperscript{366}PR, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{367}RE, pp. 96–97.
\textsuperscript{368}RE, p. 63.
\textsuperscript{369}PR, p. 24.
each remaining distinct.\textsuperscript{370} Anderson notes the similarity of this description of relations to the “I-Thou” relation of Martin Buber. The two developed their work independently, but it is interesting to note the similarities in construction. Buber focused on what happens “between” two persons, while Macmurray emphasized the “reciprocity in action” of two persons.\textsuperscript{371} A further point of distinction is Macmurray’s arrangement of “You and I,” contra Buber’s “I-Thou.” Macmurray arranges the “you” first, properly affirming the existence of another for one’s own being, where Buber begins with the “I.” This priority of “I” may have unconscious ramifications, establishing the primacy of the isolated self who connects with the other in a secondary phase. For Macmurray, the “you” represented the field of the personal and must logically precede the “I.”

Macmurray believes that the grammatical distinction between “you” and “I” is derived from our speech-situation and is a linguistic reflection of our personal nature as beings who share in mutual self-expression.\textsuperscript{372} “You” and “I” are defined as the second and first persons in grammar and as the constituent parts of a relation. Referring to the “third person,” the subject of the conversation, speakers do not merely give information to one another, they give themselves in an act of communion. They bridge the physical gulf through mutual communication (verbal and non-verbal) to achieve personal unity as each values the other.\textsuperscript{373}

In the case of science, the third person (the object) becomes primarily significant. This speech-situation is impersonal because it is merely a transfer of information, using language as a means to a pragmatic end rather than communion with another person. The object’s importance includes the “I” (no personal involvement is allowed on the part of the scientist). The “you” is an indifferent “observer.” No “you” need be present for the scientist. A “somebody” who will use the information about “it” (the object of study) some day is sufficient for scientific purposes.\textsuperscript{374} Hence, one might say the form of science is “it for somebody,” reducing “you” or “I” to bearers of information. The “it” is most significant because of its utility “for” the user of the data.

Art also departs from personal notions by universalizing the second person. The artist, inspired by personal contact with the third person, hopes to communicate to

\textsuperscript{370}PR, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{371}Anderson, \textit{HT}, p. 202, footnote 42. Anderson personally asked Macmurray about his dependence on Buber and Macmurray responded that he had formulated his concepts previous to reading Buber’s works. Anderson notes other distinctions between the two, but we will limit our discussion here as this area extends beyond the focus of this work.
\textsuperscript{372}RE, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{373}RE, pp. 146–48.
\textsuperscript{374}RE, pp. 149–51. See also \textit{PR}, pp. 180–81.
the second person something of the artist's experience (through a specific medium). However, the artist is so immersed in the expression (the work of art) that he/she does not depend upon a specific person to observe it. The second person becomes "anybody" who will look or listen. In this state, the artist desires to give rather than to receive. The artist gives in self-expressing, but frustrates the mutuality of communication by not listening. The "exchange" becomes impersonal and one-sided. Thus, art is self-expression of an "I express it" in the place of a personal relation with "you." Science, however, has neglected both aspects of personal dialogue; it is fully impersonal.

Macmurray believes that only religion can facilitate and maintain completed mutual self-expression. The "you and I" relation of religion does not exclude the "it," since all real relations must be lived in the context of the world, but properly subordinates it within the personal relation. Again, religion does not exclude science or art, but gives them proper grounding and reason for being. Only in community can we be fully human, knowing other persons, the world, and God.

From this discussion, we can understand that proper communication is a basic condition of true community. By proper, I mean mutual, voluntary, self-revealing—valuing the other as equal, and desirous of entering into personal communion. Conversation between friends provides the best illustration of this kind of interchange. It is not highly structured, but is free and creative—a "temporal and changing expression of an eternal and unchanging unity between them."

Through communication, our consciousness transcends our bodily existence and engages with the Other. Self-transcendence is the natural property upon which personal relations are based. "In being ourselves we go beyond ourselves to reach the world." To be a person, we must encounter another person, not merely the material or organic world. The other must also be willing to encounter us and engage in mutuality of relation. We cannot merely observe one another;

376 While art is a step toward "being in relation" with the Other because the artist reveals the "I," it loses the personal "you."
377 SRR, p. 72.
378 PR, p. 179.
379 RE, p. 149. Throughout his works, Macmurray relies on the conversation between friends as the most adequate illustration of personal relations.
380 A:'OR,' p. 191.
381 CSR, p. 525.
382 FMW, p. 135. See also CF, p. 74, "Our reality as persons is always in us, and yet beyond us. We are and are not ourselves. Any human fellowship is both a matter of fact and a matter of intention."
we must participate in a dynamic interchange, a togetherness of self and other.\textsuperscript{383} Kirkpatrick believes the language of “participation” (including terms such as “coinherence” and “indwelling”) is inadequate because it is essentially organic. He believes persons encompass the material and organic “infrastructures” as conditions for a “loving, intentional relation with other persons.”\textsuperscript{384} However, the language of participation need not be limited to an organic sense. They are metaphors and properly can include full personal expression, but one must use such metaphors carefully, including and emphasizing the personal dimension. Hedman proposes the term “relational” (though Macmurray never used the term) to express the core of personal existence—along with the commonly used term “mutual.”\textsuperscript{385} This term can refer to the relation between two material objects, but more commonly for Macmurray, it is used to describe fully personal, mutual interchange between humans and God and therefore, “relational anthropology” is a fitting description of Macmurray’s position on personhood.

Perhaps most helpful in describing the fully relational person is the term heterocentric. Macmurray uses it to depict positive motivation that originates outside of oneself and has a center of reference in the Other: simply put, love. It contrasts the term egocentric, which refers to an inward focus whose center of reference is self and is characterized by fear. Such persons exhibit defensiveness and the need to protect their rights (as isolated selves).\textsuperscript{386} Although the heterocentric person is motivated by fear at times, it is always with reference to the other (as in the case of a parent protecting a child). According to Macmurray, fear is a “negative and subordinate component in a persistently positive motivation.”\textsuperscript{387} This “capacity to love objectively,” he concludes, “is the capacity which makes us persons.”\textsuperscript{388} Love, when referred to heterocentric personhood, is far more than emotion or an ideal: it is the active fulfillment of persons in relation, liberating the other through intimate fidelity. This does not imply a fusion of selves.\textsuperscript{389} Rather, it values the uniqueness of persons and provides a context for free expression and growth. “Once a personal relationship is established the differences between

\textsuperscript{383}PR, p. 209.
\textsuperscript{384}Kirkpatrick, “Toward a Metaphysic of Community,” pp. 579–80. Kirkpatrick criticizes Augustine Shutte in this section, but Macmurray himself uses the language of participation, which is easily impregnated with the fully personal sense Kirkpatrick hopes to portray.
\textsuperscript{385}Hedman, “Concepts of Responsibility,” p. 80.
\textsuperscript{386}PR, pp. 71–72. See also pp. 122–23, where Macmurray describes the communal mode of morality as characteristically heterocentric.
\textsuperscript{387}PR, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{388}RE, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{389}Hedman, “Concepts of Responsibility,” p. 106.
the persons concerned are the stuff out of which the texture of their fellowship is woven. And provided the equal relationship is maintained, it is precisely the differences that enrich the relationship. The greater the differences the more there is to share." Diversity in unity is valued, not threatening.

Those who have entered into fully personal relations with the others experience friendship. This is not merely a form of association with the other whereby one protects oneself or as a means to some end: it is an honest, trusting relation based on love. Friendship is an "inter-personal consciousness," and is fully objective; one finding one's being by a conscious intentional relation to the Other. It is, as Duncan points out, the ideal form of relation for Macmurray and, as such, is the basis of true religion. Hence, one cannot become a truly religious person by memorizing dogma or attending religious functions, but only by being a true friend. The focus will be on relations. The quality of a person is to be found in the quality of personal relations. Fulfilled personhood, then, is found in "the communion of persons" as friends. Hence, friendship is the context of freedom and those who abandon themselves to mutually trusting friendships are fulfilled, free persons.

The fulfillment of such communion obviously excludes individualism and solitude and places a person "firmly in the world he knows, and so restores him to his proper existence as a community of persons in relation." Only in the context of community can one overcome the fear of others that inhibits freedom and so fulfill personhood. Community requires true faith—living in confidence and trust—and leads to the intimacy which sets persons free.

---

390 RE, pp. 104–05.
391 PR, pp. 150–51.
392 IU, p. 134.
393 Duncan, "No Man...", p. 40.
394 PR, p. 95. See also SRR, p. 72.
395 RE, p. 223.
396 PR, p. 12.
Personal Existence in John Zizioulas' Thought

In this chapter, I propose that, for John Zizioulas personhood cannot be separated from the church. He believes that one becomes a person through ecclesial capacity and that fulfilled personhood is true freedom. According to Zizioulas, in order to be fulfilled, and, thus, free, one must transcend the necessity and individuality of biological existence. Hence, human freedom, in this system, is the fulfillment of an ecclesial function which enables humans to transcend their biological existence.

Zizioulas is concerned about issues of personhood and freedom specifically as they relate to the eastern and western contexts. He is concerned that misunderstandings of personhood have resulted in division between these communities and, therefore, have frustrated the experience of unity (and, hence, freedom).

With this in mind, he desires to formulate a proper ontology of personhood that will provide the basis for a reunification of the eastern and western churches. In order to accomplish this, he employs the Cappadocian formulations of personhood, especially those regarding the Trinity, which, he emphasizes, ontologically exists as communion. By sharing in the communion of God, the ecclesial community enables human beings to transcend history so as to become persons and thus provides the context for freedom, which Zizioulas believes is the result of—indeed, synonymous with—fulfilled personhood.
3.1 The Shift in Understanding Personal Existence

It is critical to understand Zizioulas within his tradition and his interpretations of patristic formulations, upon which he builds his system, because they determine what he means by the term person. Especially important for our discussion is the patristic concept of *hypostasis* in *ekstasis* as definitive for personal existence.

3.1.1 John Zizioulas in the Context of the Orthodox Tradition

The west parted from the east specifically over the issue of how the being of the Trinity should be articulated. The continuing question addresses how one maintains balance between the oneness and the threeness of God—in what sense do we claim God is one and in what sense three? The west undiscriminatingly has held to a unique God-essence shared by the three persons, without clear enunciation as to the nature of the one substance. To the eastern tradition, in which Zizioulas stands, this initial discussion of God’s being introduces God as an impersonal, substantial category of being. Thus, the impassioned response of the east is to explicate the personal nature of God which calls the church to participate in worship. Rather than formulating the nature of God as an end in itself, the east aims to bring persons into participation with the God who exists as community.

The west has always appeared modalistic to the east, because the three persons of the Trinity are distinguished as three faces or masks (prosopon) who share the same substance. Hence, the personal nature of the Trinity as a union of three is lost to a quintessential unity which is unexplained. The east would prefer that less were explained with regard to the ontology of God’s essential being because its theology assumes an unknowability of the true essence of God. The concern is with respect to what is argued to be known and how it is known. Tertullian, influential to western theology, explained the internal nature of the Trinity by means of the economy of God, and did not keep the essence and energies of God separate (as the east would have it) and appeared to have a window into God’s being. Through an analogy of the complexity of the human’s unified yet diverse internal constitution, he attempted to speak of the nature of God. Once started on this course the west, especially through Augustine¹, pursued a confident, rational categorization of the being of God based in the human experience and on God’s activity in the world. Knowledge of God became increasingly formulaic for the purpose of scientific categorization, making God an object, rather than the subject who is the creator. With an emphasis on the economy of God, the modes of God’s

¹Watson. G., 'Filioque,' pp317,318
being in the world were distinctly discussed and presentations of God's being became static and fragmented, neglecting to consider the dynamic nature of the God who cannot be fully known.

The east assumes a different starting point in its theology and correspondingly different methods of knowing God. The activity of God in the world is to transform the creature through renewal which occurs in the context of worship. Thus, the statements made about God have a liturgical form; knowledge of God is articulated in the church's worship for the purpose of facilitating an encounter with God. As Zernov points out, "The Eastern Christians consider that nothing which has not some direct bearing upon worship need be dogmatically defined, the confession of faith is a part of doxology, dogmas safeguard the Trinitarian vision of God and the truth of the Incarnation." God is known personally in the church's liturgical experience through mystical encounter.

The east holds in tension the transcendence (and, hence, mystery) of God and the Trinitarian nature (which implies involvement) of God. Theology must begin by taking seriously the hidden nature of God, safeguarding God's mystery, and approach its task by articulating the incomprehensibility of God. This is the apophatic or negative starting point of eastern theology. Lossky claims that all eastern theology is "fundamentally apophatic" in recognition of the uncreated nature of God which is radically distinct from human nature. This is not to deny the incarnation or knowledge of God through Christ, but to affirm the power of the Spirit in the present to meet and transform human persons. Watson identifies this as the "ontological renewal of the creature celebrated in the liturgy." For eastern theology it is in and through the church that one sees and is changed by God.

---

4 This is why Zizioulas must part with Barth who claims the being of God can be fully known in the revelation of God in Christ, and consequently, we must not look for a God behind the back of Jesus.
6 Gordon Watson, "The Filioque—Opportunity for Debate?" *SJT* 41 (1988): 317. One is forced to ask at this point as to whether this form of theology, while it appears to safeguard God's being, might collapse into an anthropocentric form that is primarily concerned with the creature. (See Torrance, Thomas F. *Theology in Reconstruction: Essays Toward Evangelical and Catholic Unity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 224, where he addresses Basil's starting point with the Spirit and notes how it can easily be taken to the conclusions of anthropocentric nineteenth century theology.)
There the otherness of God becomes nearness while remaining mystery, "God is both further from us, and nearer to us than anything else." In approaching God as mysterious, our assumptions are shattered and we are prepared to encounter God.

Having all categories for God removed, humans are then able to meet the person of God. One is moved to faith, which is not a rational affirmation, but rather is a personal relationship. This relationship is established by Trinitarian worship which begins with the personal center of the Father, who is the source of the Trinitarian relationships and creates. It then moves toward us in the Son who redemptively comes to humanity from the Father, and is realized in us by the Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and draws us into the communing life of God. Thus, the Trinity is not an abstract concept to be explained, but is a personal being to be encountered in worship. With the church, all human history is caught up into the being of God. Thus, the Trinity has practical importance for every aspect of life and worship as the dynamic involvement of God in human affairs, which revolutionizes human experience and understanding.

The theology of the east, then, is a theology of union between the Christian and God. In the experience of the church, one meets the God of revelation. One partakes of the divine life in an increasingly intimate communion. This is why Zizioulas has such a clear focus on the church as the vehicle for achieving the full realization of personhood. This union that is hoped for is, ideally, never cast in the form of a system, but always remains dynamic and personal. However, the question remains whether eastern theology is finally individualist in this mystical encounter. Is it as Constantelos says, "Mysticism tends to stress the individualistic approach to religion," or possibly truly relational, an expression by the individual for the benefit of a complete network of relations. Zizioulas will certainly propose that this mystical element is the key to facilitation of relationship with God, but a thorough critique will have to address the role of the church for him—specifically, has it become a systemic element in an otherwise personal framework. If the church institution is a necessary, contingent mediatory for union, then one must ask whether the east operates with a system or a relationship.

It will now be clear that Zizioulas stands in a Trinitarian tradition whose emphasis is vitally concerned with personhood, firstly with regard to the Trinity, but

---

7 Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Press, 1986), p. 14. He goes on to say that "God grows ever more intimate and ever more distant, well known and yet unknown."


10 Constantelos, *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church*, p. 105.
also with the important subsequent task of defining and fulfilling human personhood through union with God. Through the mystical experience, the east believes that a more personal relation is established, contrary to the scientific method usually employed in the west which assumes the ability to detach from the object of study to achieve knowledge. But Michael Polanyi does not hold this tension between science and theology, identifying both as standing with wonder before the unknown, who through experience, come to a personal knowledge of the other.\textsuperscript{11} The value of Zizioulas' contributions to theological anthropology within the eastern tradition are manifest in his formulations of the Trinity, which do not contradict adequate scientific methodology, but integrate the proper scientific and theological tasks of leading the knower to a personal knowledge of that which is to be known. Having established a personal ontology of the Trinity, based in the dynamic interrelatedness of three persons, he provides the basis to articulate human personal ontology, reflecting the image of God.

3.1.2 The Neo-Patristic Synthesis

Zizioulas challenges theology which focuses on how we know God and proposes that patristic theology has rightly presupposed the existence of God as true person and therefore requires no philosophical justification. In so doing, he hopes to separate ontology from gnosiology. He believes that philosophical formulations are valid only as they reflect alignment with the patristic understanding of God and does not justify this premise.\textsuperscript{12} It is vital to note his apparently unquestioned acceptance of patristic theology because it has implications for the entirety of his subsequent formulations regarding personhood and freedom—both of God and of humanity.\textsuperscript{13} Rejecting western gnosiology, Zizioulas adopts the patristics as his primary resource for theology and their formulations shape his conclusions and although he claims to begin in doxology, I believe it is actually a patristic basis that determines his approach. Thus, an examination of Zizioulas' depiction of patristic thought—pertinent to the topic of personhood—is in order.

The patristics rejected the Greek perception of the world as a closed, unified set of objects and asserted instead that the cosmos has an origin outside of itself: in God who acts in freedom, not necessity. According to patristic theology, God

\textsuperscript{11}Polanyi, \textit{Personal Knowledge}, pp. 196-99. Polanyi even refers to Lossky in this section saying "[Mysticism] invites us, through a succession of 'detachments', to seek in absolute ignorance union with Him who is beyond all being and all knowledge.

\textsuperscript{12}BAC, p. 46, see footnote 40. Zizioulas appears to argue this in the form of a rhetorical question.

\textsuperscript{13}I would also suggest that Zizioulas relies on ecclesial authority and that it permeates the rest of his thought.
liberated existence from its necessity into a state of freedom resulting from this free act. Personhood, they concluded, was not an aspect of biological substance (as a closed ontology suggested), but was freely created and maintained in communion with God. Thus, the true nature of a thing or person could no longer be known in itself, as a substance; knowledge was acquired through the act of free communion with another.

The fathers linked personhood with an enduring existence because they believed that personal existence did not end with death, whereas biological existence did. Consequently, personhood was traced to God, who in personal freedom exists ontologically as one eternal being in a communion of three persons: one being in three modes of existence. Personhood, they believed was ontologically relational rather than supplementary to either divine or biological substance. The "neopatristic synthesis" that Zizioulas recounts here grounds personal ontology in communion and as such, personal being cannot be confined to empirically acquired data regarding the substance of a biological being. It is lived in the event of communion which is given by God, shared with others, and maintained by participation in the church of God.

In addition, the early church sought to provide a proper context for understanding personhood by proposing that all created things were valued as a unity in time. In so doing, it safeguarded against individualism—which conceives of the self as separate from the world and inclined toward introspective self-consciousness. In the liturgy, the church affirmed involvement in the material world as an event of communion with God and other humans. They also affirmed human involvement as priests of creation.

Furthermore, according to the early fathers, the Eucharist was neither a mere remembrance of the cross nor an introspective event. Rather, by lifting elements to the Creator Father, giving thanks (eucharistia) on behalf of all creation, and offering creation back to the Creator, one participated in communion (sharing).

---

14 BAC, pp. 39–40. This was an open ontology.
15 BAC, pp. 89–92. To my knowledge, Zizioulas has not explained the nature of this personal knowledge. Perhaps it is similar to Macmurray's immediate experience or Polanyi's tacit knowledge; however, I think it is quite different.
16 BAC, p. 35.
17 BAC, pp. 39–41. Zizioulas describes the "oneness" of God as particular to the Father, who begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. More discussion on this notion is forthcoming.
19 BAC, pp. 18–19.
20 PGC1, p. 9.
21 PGC1, pp. 9–10.
Thus, Eucharist affirmed all of creation in communion with God, and the acts of the church symbolized and facilitated this relationship, confirming the personal nature of existence. God, then, was known through the shared life of the ecclesial community, which revealed the character of God as one who is known through personal relationships. From the Eucharistic experience came the understanding of God as a being in communion (rather than a substance which subsequently communes). 22 Herein lies the shift from a substantial ontology to a relational ontology.

Their interpretation of the person of Christ led the Council of Chalcedon to conclude that personhood is constituted by being in communion rather than by natural or substantial boundaries. 23 They understood that his was not a combination of natures, divine and human; rather, his personhood was uniquely constituted by being in relation to the Father and to humanity. 24 Hence, personhood (when referring to human personhood) could not be determined merely by distinguishing oneself from God and animals. Personhood, they believed, was a relational existence made possible through self-transcendence which enabled personal communion.

In clarifying their trinitarian theology, the fathers were forced to provide terms which would adequately reflect the unitary nature of God while affirming three persons who are revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 25 Unfortunately, the term homoousia, which linked the ontological integrity of the Trinity, could be interpreted as the extension of a prior substantial nature (Sabellianism). Basil attempted to resolve the problem by emphasizing the unity of the Trinity as koinonia. 26 It was Basil and the Cappadocian fathers who contributed the notion of the “person” 27 built on the ontology of Athanasius, who linked communion with substance. The Cappadocians understood concrete individuality (hypostasis) to be constituted by being in relation so that “to be and to be in relation becomes identical.” 28 This new ontological category identified hypostasis (the being of a thing or person) with...

22 BAC, p. 16.
23 'HCHI,' pp. 445–47.
24 BAC, p. 403.
26 'T2EC,' p. 35.
28 BAC, p. 88. See discussion on pp. 83–89 for the thought of Athanasius and the Cappadocian fathers.
personhood\textsuperscript{29} and, hence, a person was relationally constituted. They described God as a personal being, "caused" by the Father,\textsuperscript{30} who acts in freedom and is known in three modes of existence.\textsuperscript{31}

The Cappadocians' entirely new epistemology replaced Greek apperceptions which emphasized knowing a thing's nature. Now knowledge of personal beings was located in a communion-event\textsuperscript{32} and knowledge of God was acquired through the event of communion whereby God, in love, enabled humans to experience the personal divine life.

When referring to the activity of a person in the Trinity, they did not refer to a part of God that shares an identical substance to two other unique beings. Neither did they refer to a single person who wore three masks. Rather, they stressed the historical interaction of one of the three ways of being that God is (internally and toward the world), each ontologically connected through the relational constituting of being in communion with the other two.\textsuperscript{33}

Furthermore, knowing God was not based on comprehension of truth, but on personal communion with the One who has come.\textsuperscript{34} Such a proposal rejected narrow rational formulations of knowledge\textsuperscript{35} and summoned the church to know God with the heart, not merely the mind.\textsuperscript{36}

Zizioulas asserts that knowledge of God, as communion, is mediated primarily through the church by the Spirit. Through experience in the ecclesial community, one communes with God and is reconstituted in that relation.\textsuperscript{37} According to Zizioulas, the patristics pioneered new understandings of truth as communion, the church as community, and the person as interrelational and communal being. God is the basis for the community of the church, which is, in turn, the context in which humans become fully personal, particularly through the Eucharist. Because personhood is conditioned by such ecclesial participation, ecclesial existence supercedes (and transforms) biological existence.

\textsuperscript{29} "T2EC," p. 36.
\textsuperscript{30} "T2EC," p. 37 and BAC, pp. 40-41.
\textsuperscript{31} BAC, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{32} BAC, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{33} "T2EC," p. 41. Zizioulas argues here against using \textit{homoousios} for the Spirit, affirming rather that the Spirit is with the Father and Son, though he does acknowledge the Spirit as God.
\textsuperscript{34} ECC, p. 37. God then sends humans into the world in order that others may know God through them, though Zizioulas does not explain how.
\textsuperscript{35} Therefore, Ireneaus opposed Gnostics' reliance on human reason alone.
\textsuperscript{36} BAC, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{37} BAC, p. 16.
The Eucharist, Zizioulas believes, is of primary significance among the sacraments because it is the event of communion which brings about personhood. Maximus the Confessor believed that all existence assumed Eucharistic significance in that it is meant to share in communion with God. Thus, it was the Eucharist which brought creation to its eschatological end: the communion for which it was created. Zizioulas is profoundly influenced by Maximus’ conviction of the centrality of the Eucharist and it is an influence which is evident throughout his works.

As stated earlier, Zizioulas regards the patristic agenda to be supremely important to the modern church because until we clarify the nature of the Creator, we have no basis for knowing creation or persons. Although he is wary of theological formulations, his emphasis on the patristic theologians suggests that, in spite of himself, he relies heavily on theological formulations and his invitation to communion with God is not merely relational in nature. He desires that persons intellectually know God’s nature in order that they may personally know God. This emphasis on right understanding conditions right relation and reveals a rational priority over relational knowledge and one suspects that the relational aspect of Zizioulas’ agenda is in danger of being ecclesiably institutionalized.

3.1.3 Hypostasis in Ekstasis

Having established that hypostasis (being) is identified ontologically with personhood, especially with regard to God, Zizioulas rejects a substantive notion in favor of a specific “way of being.” He asserts that understanding the triune God subsequently enlightens us regarding our own personal nature—albeit, it is conditioned upon our understanding of the humanity of Christ. As God is personal, personhood is ontologically prior to all existence. God (person) creates reality (existence).

Human personhood is a specific manner of relating to other beings rather than a substantive individual in isolation. Personality, as distinct from personhood, is “a complex of natural, psychological or moral qualities which are in some sense ‘possessed’ by or ‘contained’ in the human individuum.” However, “movement toward communion” transcend the physical boundaries of self, resulting in a knowing communion with another. The movement toward communion is not merely a general outward movement, but is a specific motion toward interconnection with

---

38 ECC, pp. 42-43.
40 HCHI, p. 407.
41 HCHI, p. 408.
another. The hypostasis of a person, as a relational being, is not such merely in the capacity to relate to others, but in the fact that one exists specifically because of this personal, dynamic interconnectedness of ek-stasis. Therefore, it can be said that we have our hypostasis (being) in ek-stasis: our personhood is established in communion. "Thus communion does not threaten personal particularity; it is constitutive of it."43

With respect to the being of God, one can describe God’s personhood as the free way in which God acts in communion.44 We know this in the world because the Father, in an expression of free, personal love, sent the Son and the Spirit. Love is not a characteristic of God: it is God’s “mode of existence” which constitutes God’s being and is exercised in freedom. God is not bound by necessity45 and, hence, the being of God is in free communion, in ek-stasis.

Although Zizioulas defines communion as an ontological category, his language of ek-stasis suggests previously isolated elements that move together. He refers to a being not “determined by its own boundaries” but which “breaks through these boundaries in a movement of communion.”46 The movement of two beings emphasizes a priori distinctness which finds resolution in encounter. He lacks the “field of the personal” which Macmurray believes precedes individuality—a lack which is evident in his depictions of the Trinity. He conveys the impression that the Father precedes the Son and Spirit.47 The Son and the Spirit appear to responsively subordinate themselves to the will of the Father and, thus, do not appear to exercise their will as full persons. The Father, then, is ek-static through the Spirit and the Son, rather than mutual ek-stasis proceeding from communion in a completely triune movement. According to Zizioulas, personhood is particular to the Father and is caused subsequently in the Son and Spirit: God is person as Father—not as Father, Son and Spirit.48

Human personhood is realized in the ek-static movement, initiated by the Spirit

42Ray Anderson characterizes ek-stasis as “a dynamic ‘standing out of’ one’s self toward the ‘whence’ of essential being.” (HT, p. 240, footnote 29.) He hopes to use the term in a “restricted and technical” sense, denoting the relation of a being to its “ultimate and original source” and he distinguishes “ek-stasis” (note that he intentionally maintains the hyphen) from the word “ecstatic” (the experience of “being beside oneself.”)

43HCHI, p. 409.

44BAC, p. 44.

45BAC, p. 46.

46HCHI, p. 409.

47The Trinity is such because “the Father as a person freely wills this communion” (BAC, p. 44).

48HCHI, p. 410. Again, this appears to depart from individuality and move toward plurality, in the place of being in communion.
who brings persons into communion with Christ. As the head of humanity, Christ makes possible “personhood in which the distance of individuals is turned into the communion of persons” and is “de-individualized,” incorporating humans into himself so that he acquires a body. Ek-static movement clearly results because Christ, for humanity, is the “initiator of personhood,” not as a the conglomeration of individualized humans, but as the head of a unified humanity. According to Zizioulas, this corporate Christ is the human par excellence, who enables humans to be de-individualized and restores personhood in the “emergence of true personal otherness and identity.” The emphasis in ek-static personhood is on being “de-introverted,” released from the fragmenting affect of egocentric existence.

The church, then, is the ek-static body of Christ, and its communion is realized through its hypostatic union with Christ and lived in the ek-static reality of the Spirit. As such, it is an extension of God in the world and is the vehicle by which God’s intention in the world can be fulfilled. God’s intention, before the fall, was that humans offer this possibility of hypostatic catholicity to all of creation as the priests of creation. Christ overcomes fallen humanity’s introverted perversion of personhood and restores humanity and creation to communion with God through the ek-stasis of the church.

According to Zizioulas, the ek-static being of God invites humans to personhood through the sacrament of baptism. Through an ek-static response to God’s ek-stasis, humans experience communion with Christ’s corporate body and participation in the triune fellowship of God. Thus, the church is the vital ek-static community of Christ: the vehicle through which, by the power of the Spirit, alienated humanity realizes communion and personhood. In this initiating, ek-static movement, God is present with the church (and hence, present and accessible for all of creation).
Reflecting God’s concern for and involvement with the needs and anxieties of human existence, the church is involved in the world. Historically, the church has often addressed the question of its mission to the world in terms of methodology. It is pertinent to challenge the appropriateness of such an understanding. Mission is not a method: it is God’s ek-static movement which draws the world into communion—a mission which the church shares by participation in the ek-static movement of God.\textsuperscript{59}

\textit{Ek-stasis} refers to and necessitates personal involvement with others. Zizioulas believes this orientation was destroyed in the fall and that restored personhood is achieved by communion with God, reversing the individualization resulting from the fall, and reorienting persons to participation in relationship—especially within the ecclesial community.

\section*{3.2 Zizioulas’ Understanding of Personal Existence}

As previously discussed, Zizioulas’ reliance on the patristic fathers thoroughly influences his formulations of personhood. His understanding of personal existence is founded on a relational ontology\textsuperscript{60} derived from the patristic depiction of the Trinity, wherein being consists of communion. From this ontology, he identifies the church as a personal community that has its being only by sharing in this divine life. In this context, human persons are released from biological individuality into true personhood by sharing in the communion of the church. He believes this process is relevant not only for humans, but for the communion God intends for all of creation.

\subsection*{3.2.1 The Personal Nature of God}

Zizioulas believes the true nature of being is derived from the divine life. Hence, if we are specifically to understand personhood, we must ask how God exists as a personal being. To do this, he reenters the ancient debates on this issue from the perspective of Orthodoxy and certain patristic fathers, proposing that the personhood of God is constituted as a being in communion. Claiming that the west has confused the divine nature by conceiving it as a substance, he believes that this notion is the reason behind western individualism. By reaffirming the communal


nature of God, he hopes to reverse the individualism which has fostered alienation. He proposes that this is the only way to reconcile east and west—indeed, it is the only way the church can fulfill its purpose of restoring the creation to God.

**Trinitarian Existence**

According to Zizioulas’ hypothesis: misunderstandings over the nature of God as a triune, yet unified, being prompted the church’s need to clarify the personhood of God and these misunderstandings did not find resolution in the councils; instead, they sparked the crisis that led to the schism between east and west. The early church fathers believed that the uniqueness of the triune God lies in God’s uncreated life of mutuality. In contrast, the world is created and substantial—a distinction that was of great importance in the early church councils. Because the divine nature cannot be identified as a substantial reality, it is distinct from the created world. Therefore, when referring to the divine nature of Christ, as *homoousios* with the Father, the point was not to define God substantially (to find a substance that the Father and Son shared), but to portray clearly that Christ is not created.61 This concern is related directly to the *a priori* notions of personhood that east and west brought to the councils. Each sought to address the personhood of Christ with different assumptions about what personhood is and these presuppositions directly determined how each sought to meet the challenge of understanding the triune personhood of God.

The eastern criticism of the west is that it has envisioned a prior divine substance shared by the persons of the Trinity. Augustine proposed that the Trinity was based on a common divine essence. Primarily emphasizing the oneness of God, he less adequately addressed the nature of the personhood of the three. Hence, a predominantly unipersonal God emerged and though one could discuss the persons of the Trinity one at a time, they were conceived as manifestations of the one essence attempting to incorporate *a priori* notions of personhood. The west emphasized the individual distinctions and roles each person assumed toward the world and in the process, sacrificed a satisfactory understanding of their interrelatedness. The oneness of God, consequently, referred to a common essence rather than to the oneness that is created in the *koinonia* of the three in mutual love.62

The east, on the other hand, emphasized the threeness of God, such that they risked defining the persons of the Trinity on a tripersonal model whereby the oneness of God was established in the mutual love and indwelling between three

---

61 *T2EC*, p. 32.
62 Kallistos Ware, “The Human Person as the Icon of the Trinity,” *Sobornost* 3 (1986): 8–9.
separate person. The three distinct persons, united in purpose, draw a life of communion from one another. In this model, the source in the Trinity is the Father, who causes the Son and the Spirit. Thus, the east believed that when God is referred to in the Bible, the reference is to the Father and the genitive “of God” implies “of the Father.”

By assuming this model, the east placed the origin and destiny of humanity in the Father and regarded the Son and the Spirit as subordinate persons who cooperated with, and worked to bring about the Father’s desire. The church, then, was determined to be firstly the church of God the Father; subsequently, the body of Christ; finally, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Attempting to reconcile this model based on distinction with unity revealed in Christ and witnessed to in scripture, they proposed that the distinct persons were united in purpose toward the world and herein was the basis of the oneness of the Godhead. This, Zizioulas believes, is the proper model for understanding trinitarian personhood, both in distinction and in unity. He affirms, with the Cappadocians, “the full distinction and integrity of the trinitarian Persons” and he especially commends Basil, who avoided the term *homoousia* because of its allusions to a unity of substance. Instead, he favored *koinonia*, which portrayed oneness as a way of communing.

Basil’s preference was due to his belief that there is a fundamental distinction between what we can say about God as God is within Godself (immanently or eternally) and what can be said about God through God’s self-revelation to the world (economically). An economic approach to knowledge, commences with the Spirit who enables us through the Son to know the Father. Conversely, one can speak of the initiative of the Father expressed through the Son and made known to us by the Holy Spirit. In the immanent Trinity, however—known through Eucharistic experience—the three persons of the Trinity are equal in honor without hierarchical distinction. Here, the priority of the Father is de-emphasized in favor of the oneness of the three in communion.

Although this is a helpful discussion regarding the difficult challenge of understanding God’s personhood, I am concerned about the articulation of two forms of

---

63 Ware, “Human Person as Icon,” p. 8.
64 ‘MOC,’ p. 295.
65 ‘MOC,’ p. 298. He refers here to the Trinity as the foundation for the church in this section, but the characterization is true for all his theology because it derives from the same triune God.
66 ‘T2EC,’ p. 34. See also BAC, p. 134, footnote 23.
67 ‘T2EC,’ p. 38.
68 ‘T2EC,’ p. 38.
69 ‘T2EC,’ p. 39.
the Trinity. Zizioulas distinguishes between the economic and immanent Trinity—a distinction which confuses his attempt to clarify the cloudy issue of personhood and, unfortunately, disallows real (practical) freedom in human experience. The distinctions between God’s visible being (hierarchal) and God’s internal being (communal) weaken his paradigm and challenge his desire to affirm personal being in communion. His belief that God’s being is known but only through the experience of the ecclesial community (either liturgically or eucharistically) denies the revelational nature of God’s incarnated act in the world. While he affirms that the economy of the Trinity is God working, he apparently does not regard this to be adequate revelation for the purpose of gifting humans with true knowledge about God’s being. According to Zizioulas’ formulations, the economic Trinity’s focus seems to be that of bringing us to a communion event whereby we are brought to God so as to have a mystical (real) knowledge of God in worship.

By distinguishing between the persons such that, economically, we know a hierarchical God in the threeness and in worship, we know the one eternal God of “being in communion,” Zizioulas separates the being of God from the act of God. His approach is “based on liturgical experience and worship and thus to a theology which does not rest upon historical or economical experience.” Rather than affirming that we know God through Christ and the Spirit—in God’s act—and intertwining epistemology with doxology, Zizioulas favors pneumatology and, therefore, limits true knowledge to the immanent Trinity.

With these concerns in mind, it might be better to propose that there is no Father without the Son: that the communion of God is expressed in the being of the Son as the Word in human form. Here, not only does God have an

---

70 Again, if we do not know God through the unique revelation of God in Christ in history, then we are left to wonder how Zizioulas knows about God and whether he can avoid the dangers of mysticism.
71 ‘T2EC,’ p. 39.
72 BAC, p. 84. “To be is not the same as to will or, hence, as to act.” Here, Zizioulas clearly distinguishes himself from both Macmurray and Barth.
73 ‘T2EC,’ p. 40. See also pp. 51–52.
74 BAC, p. 85, footnote 60. If Zizioulas had been consistent, he would have reflected, to its conclusion, the thought of Athanasius, whom he quotes, “If the Son was not there before he was born; there would be no truth in God.” However, he has stated elsewhere that the person of God is identified with the person of the Father. In his formulation of being as communion, he implies that without the eternal relation of Father-Son-Spirit, there would be no eternal being of God; the relation is what constitutes God as God. He contradicts his original thesis in his prioritization of the person of the Father and his subsequent focus on the begetterness and sentness of the Son such that the Son (and, likewise, the Spirit) is economically subordinate. In so doing, he misses the revealed communal ontology of the Son (e.g., “He who has seen me, has seen the Father” (John 14:9) and “The Father and I are one”) (John 10:30). One suspects that he would produce a more coherent
eternal being in relation, but also a revealed being in relation, and this cannot be separated. Zizioulas' emphasis on the Spirit misses a Christological conditioning of his pneumatology and, perhaps, this is where the lack can be corrected. By having a mutually conditioned approach (pneumatologically conditioned Christology and a christologically conditioned pneumatology), we may be able to avoid the imbalance which Zizioulas' model introduces.

Zizioulas essentially adopts a dual system which embraces two approaches to knowledge of God: 1) in communion (by the Spirit), and 2) in reflection (on the Son). It is a knowledge which is accompanied by two kinds of being: 1) hierarchical, and 2) communal. Rather than integrating his epistemology, Zizioulas opts for the priority of pneumatological epistemology and sustains a hierarchy within the communal Trinity—despite the fact that hierarchy, according to his system, is supposed to be an attribute of the economic being of God.

Consequently, Zizioulian advances on a relational ontology are threatened by a pneumatologically conditioned Christology which is not reciprocally balanced by a Christologically conditioned pneumatology. If we seek communion with God, a balance in our formulations of divine personhood is necessary. As Richard of St. Victor suggested, given the character of God as love, a being alone can only have self-love, but love is a gift which requires another for an exchange of mutual love. Divine love advances beyond mere mutuality and desires further expression in a shared love, giving the mutual love to a third person. Thus, the being of God is shared love.

God exists eternally with this relational character. There is no more fundamental element in God's existence: therefore, the eternal design of Trinity is expressed precisely by drawing all creation to participate in the divine life of communion. Thus, "The Holy Trinity is a primordial ontological concept and not a notion which is added to the divine substance ..." God, a relationally

---

72 Even then, he does so inconsistently.
73 Inconsistency further pervades his system in his ecclesiology which is also hierarchical (episcopos over priesthood over laity) and deemphasizes the interpersonal dimension of a mutual community of believers. Furthermore, his anthropology, which prioritizes ecclesial existence over biological existence, reflects a dualistic approach which separates the mystical realm from the practical (and favors the former).
74 'T2EC,' p. 36.
75 I concur with Zizioulas' emphasis on the shared life of the eternal Trinity; however, I disagree with his hierarchical depiction of the economic Trinity for reasons already mentioned.
76 BAC, p. 211.
77 BAC, p. 17. As in the west.
constituted being, consists in the personal communion of Father, Son, and Spirit and therefore, one cannot refer to the prior existence of one before, or in isolation from, the others. Each person is constituted in relation with the other two and the being of God coincides with the communion of all three.\(^82\) "The three persons constitute each other as persons, receive from and give to each other what they are, and only as such are one God."\(^83\) In this mutually constitutive, inner orderliness of free relation exists the one being of God.\(^84\) God's personal communion is a "mode of existence" whereby God is freed from an ontologically bound nature which compels God to act in a particular manner.\(^85\)

Therefore, when referring to God, one cannot propose notions of human individuality—as though God's personhood were somehow parallel to, and reflective of, the mental and emotional aspects of human personhood sans a biological body. Such depictions rob the term "personal" of its relational character, assuming the guise of individuality (e.g., "this is my personal preference"). If God's being (and ours) is interpersonal, it must be as a unity formed in self-transcendence and inter-connectedness. Perhaps it would be more helpful if Zizioulas were to integrate more consistently the doctrine of perichoresis, which he has used more of the church than of the Trinity.\(^86\)

Again, I contend that the interlocking complementarity\(^87\) within the Trinity should be the foundation for ecclesiology and anthropology. As a community of persons, we participate in and reflect to the world the one fellowship which exists in the Godhead.\(^88\) The church exists as one body in a reconciled at-oneness, each person acting for the other and finding life in one another. The life of the Trinity grants humans true personal being—not in an individual relational sense, but in a personal sense.\(^89\) Consequently, one does not exist as *imago Dei*, by reflecting a deistic view of God in singularity. The *Dei* refers to the trinitarian God by whom we are made *imago Trinitatis* (in communion) and only as such can we be persons.\(^90\)

---

\(^{82}\) BAC, p. 134.


\(^{85}\) BAC, p. 44. *Contra* the ontological necessity of human biological existence.

\(^{86}\) See 'PDC,' p. 154.


\(^{89}\) BAC, p. 108.

\(^{90}\) HCHI, p. 446.
Zizioulas correctly asserts that the doctrine of the Trinity is foundational for all theology, but rather unfortunately, he has not fully integrated his ontology of personhood with his conceptions of the church and so sustains a hierarchical system which remains, ironically, impersonal.

**The Person of the Father**

If trinitarian personhood is to be the basis of all subsequent theology, we must examine that personhood with particular reference to each person of the Trinity. As previously noted, Zizioulas' presentation of God the Father as person is such that the Father takes precedence in all things thereby creating a hierarchy within the Trinity. He seems to overlook the challenges that such a hierarchy presents to a coherent formulation of personhood as being in relation. In fact, he ignores the problematic formulation when he suggests that such a hierarchy is necessary and asserts that whereas the west has determined the unifying factor in God to be in the divine nature or substance the east locates the unity in the person of the Father. He outright rejects a “panoramic” ontology of the Trinity—a “parallel co-existence of three persons, a kind of multiple manifestation of the being of God.”

In such an approach, the horizon of God is manifested in time so as to reveal the differentiation of the persons of the Trinity. Zizioulas dismissingly indicates that while perhaps this is appropriate for an economic theology of God in time, it is not appropriate “for an ontology of the trinitarian existence of God who is outside of time.” By separating the two, Zizioulas hopes to liberate the knowledge of God from the so-called gnosiology (intellectual knowledge) of the west, which focuses on the Son in order to acquire knowledge of the Father. Instead, he proposes that mystical union with God (communing knowledge), in which the Spirit acts as our avenue, is primarily the means and end of knowing God the Father. Zizioulas

---

92 *BAC*, p. 45, footnote 40.
93 *BAC*, p. 45, footnote 40.
94 The west affirms that the philosophical justification for its knowledge of God is located in the historical revelation of God in Christ. Zizioulas proposes that we must accept the presupposition that God is person (as the patristics did) without relying on philosophical justification, historical or otherwise (*BAC*, p. 46, footnote 40). However, he is inconsistent with his own assertion of the inconsequential nature of philosophical justification. By focusing on the hierarchy within the Trinity (priority of the Father), his knowledge of God is derived economically and, thus, he himself attaches knowledge to history! His description of the being of God in eternity is communal, “almost as if the Monarchy of the Father itself were an irrelevant matter” (*T2EC*, p. 39). Zizioulas’ consistent emphasis on the source of the Trinity in the Father (an economically known hierarchy) as the originator of the communal being of the Trinity makes communion subsequent to cause.
appeals to the biblical and patristic views which, he believes, identify God as the person of the Father alone. 95 Thus, the single hypostasis of God is in the Father and the ek-stasis of God is in the Son and the Spirit. 96 Consequently, the Father is the ground of being in the Trinity, the reason for the triune existence. 97

Zizioulas betrays his fundamental ontology here. He claims that the communal nature of God is constitutive of the Trinity, but he portrays the Father as the cause of this communion—as though the Father has a prior foundational position in the communing life, rather than the shared communion itself being the basis of God’s existence. Zizioulas concludes that this hierarchy is not derived from an ontological evaluation of the Trinity, but from the specificity of each person in the relation; however, the Father is the initiator of even these relations. 98 Thus, while Zizioulas says that God has being as communion (a shared life of mutual love which overflows), he works on a model of hierarchy which originates in the Father and proceeds through the Son and Spirit. In so doing, he imports Orthodox theology into his discussion of the eternal being of God. Furthermore, his hierarchical model of the Trinity results in a hierarchical system of relationships in the ecclesial community. 99 Whereas the shared life of the Trinity should create a shared life in

Thus, he has transported hierarchy into the eternal being of God, contradicting his basic thesis. (See ‘PDC,’ pp. 151–52.)

95 ‘T2EC,’ p. 46. One must ask how this can be possible, since the Father is only the Father as the Father of the Son (Athanasius), BCCI, p. 33. He defends his stance by asserting that when the Bible says God, it means the Father. While this may be true in some contexts, it is neither advisable to institute it as rule nor to imagine that the Father can exist without communion with the Son and Spirit.

96 ‘T2EC’ p. 46. This is no longer the shared love of the Trinity extending out in love to the world: it is the monarchical love of the Father expressed through the subordinate Son and Spirit.

97 BAC, pp. 88–89.

98 ‘PDC,’ pp. 151–52. See also ‘OC,’ p. 191. BCCI, p. 33, supports this as a taxis or order of arrangement with no sense of superiority. While this may appear to reflect the structure of a soccer team, where there is an ordering on the field without hierarchy, I believe the case presented by Zizioulas more closely resembles American football (in which the Father would be the quarterback: the ontology of the team is destroyed if there is no quarterback). One could argue against the existence of superiority in the arrangement, but if the one is essential whereas the others are nearly optional, the formulation reflects something other than shared mutuality.

99 ‘OC,’ p. 191. Zizioulas asserts that this is a hierarchy without value judgement—an assertion which requires further clarification as it relates to the divine life (and seems impossible in the human realm!). See Colin Gunton, *Actuality of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 196. Gunton discusses the move from community to hierarchy in the early church and proposes Zizioulas’ model as the way forward, but, as we have seen, a non-hierarchical system does not necessarily result. Gunton elsewhere (*The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), pp. 61–62) affirms Zizioulas’ communal concept of God against rival ontologies, the first of which is the neoplatonic doctrine of reality as a graded hierarchy. He cites Aquinas as
the church, Zizioulas’ structure establishes institutional hierarchies.

Gunton asks from whence the communion derives within the Trinity before he critiques Zizioulas’ hierarchical Trinity.\textsuperscript{100} If communion is ontologically prior in the Trinity, there should be no question of derivation or cause. However, Zizioulas’ model suggests that there is another prior dimension or element within the Trinity. If the communion of the three is ontological, as Zizioulas asserts, then no one of the three can be ontologically prior or exist outside of this relation so as to give the word “cause” any meaning.\textsuperscript{101} All three persons freely and mutually constitute the Trinity—not as an ontological necessity, but as the nature of shared love.

Does “ontologically primitive reality” refer only to the Father as a person, or to the triune God whose being is in communion, each of the three having existence only in shared mutuality?\textsuperscript{102} It may be argued that assertions of the Father’s priority avoid structural constraints on God and prioritize communion over personhood,\textsuperscript{103} but the ontology of personhood is in communion, and the ontology of the Trinity is in the communion of Father, Son and Spirit. Thus, to speak of the Father alone as causing the other trinitarian persons is incongruent with being as communion.

By proposing the personal initiative of the Father, the freedom of God is meant to be established as a free personal expression. But God’s freedom is in communion, not in initiation. Subtly, discussion of initiative defines freedom as the choice of an individual rather than the result of being in communion. I see no value in grounding God’s freedom in the Father alone; it destroys the notion that the freedom of God is the result of koinonia and erroneously ties it to aitia, the cause of the Father.\textsuperscript{104} Although Zizioulas states that “the person cannot exist without

proposing that the hierarchy in the church is modelled after the heavenly ontology. Though not identical to these models, Zizioulas bears a strong resemblance.

\textsuperscript{100} Gunton, \textit{Promise}, p. 165.

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{‘T2EC,’} p. 37. Zizioulas, agreeing with the Cappadocians, proposes that the Father is the source of divine existence, the cause (in the personal sense, like Macmurray’s “act” rather than “event”) who brings persons into existence through personal initiative. He intends, here, to replace the presupposition of a divine substance with a personal origination, hence “a free person, not an impersonal source.” Zizioulas might contend that cause does not equate with create; however, discussion of the Father alone introduces a distinction which should be alien to his theology. It would be valuable, though beyond the scope of this study, to evaluate how well Zizioulas’ theology maintains the parameters of the Chalcedonian formulae (which may have value for trinitian relations as well as the relation of Jesus’ two “natures”).

\textsuperscript{102} Gunton, \textit{Promise}, p. 169.


\textsuperscript{104} \textit{‘T2EC,’} p. 37.
communion,” he also believes that the Father is the “cause” of the communion of the Trinity. Whether one uses cause as a personal or impersonal initiative, it still implies priority (in some sense) before the others. If we accept that the communion of the three is mutually caused, then each is constituted in equal, eternal divine freedom and love without priority—either in a caused sense or a hierarchical sense. Only then can we appropriately discuss the ordering of the economic activity of God (which includes humiliation—in human perspective). Then the Father can send the Son; then the Son can obediently choose to be sent; then the Spirit can freely choose to participate. This is mutuality in being without necessity.

Having established the parity of the persons in the communing being of God, we can now agree with the metaphor of Irenaeus that the Son and the Spirit are the two hands of the Father acting in the world. We can understand the being of the Father through the activity of the Son and Spirit in the world as distinct aspects of the work of one being. However, the metaphor is inadequate if it is construed as one substance (the body) with appendages rather than an expression of a three-fold personal being.

Regarding the generation of the Son, Zizioulas contends that this is the free work of the Father. He neglects to mention the Spirit’s participation in this context, though such would be proper to the expression of a communal being. It would also be true to the witness of scripture, whereby the Spirit proceeds and empowers the Son in all he does. Likewise, the procession of the Spirit appears to be the free act of the Father without reference to the Son. This assumes the Spirit has personal existence which is not essentially linked to a communion with the Son, but the Spirit is not such if not as the Spirit of the Son and of the Father. The Spirit’s role in the economy of God is to make integral the person of Christ to the church, in whom the church exists by the Spirit.

Zizioulas claims to know the Father in his eternal nature and because he contends that the economy of God has not revealed this nature, he circumscribes Christ and scripture. One may ask how he knows the nature of the eternal Father if not through the witness of the Son and the written revelation. It appears that he does

\[\text{References:}\]

105 BAC, p. 18.
106 BAC, p. 17.
108 BAC, p. 41. See also ‘T2EC’ p. 43. “The Spirit by proceeding from the Father—is a person in the true sense.” However, if the being of God is essentially the communion of the three, the Spirit can only be a person in relation with Son as well. Biblically and theologically, it is impossible to conceive of the Spirit as acting apart from an essential connection with the Son.
so through the personal encounter of the Spirit and through patristic tradition.¹¹⁰ Such knowledge establishes the church as iconic, being constituted by the Spirit as a means to know (commune with) the Father. Through the Eucharist especially, the being of the Father is made known as an “opening up” of the eternal to temporal existence.¹¹¹

Zizioulas has contributed significantly to the dialogue on the ontology of personhood with his proposals of being in communion, but I believe that in his doctrine of the Father, he trades communion for hierarchy. This exchange, in turn, eventually structures the church as a hierarchical institution rather than a (mutual) community. In such a formulation, being in communion is impossible because personhood is achieved through submission to the hierarchy of the (organized) church. To use Macmurray’s distinction, this means we become persons by taking our place in a church society and it is participation in ecclesial events which constitutes personhood rather than being in communion with God and neighbor. Hence, the church is not a community of persons, it is a structured organization of component individuals who function properly within its hierarchy.¹¹²

On the Son

Christ is integral to this hierarchical church as the one who institutes it in history and, therefore, creates the means for ecclesial existence. Whereas the Father is involved in history (as is the Spirit), only the Son becomes history in the economy of God and this is the unique, particular contribution of the Son.¹¹³ Yet “wherever the Son is there also is the Father and the Spirit.”¹¹⁴ Thus, the activity of God in history is known in the Christ-event. In fact, all things in salvation history are bound irreducibly to this event.¹¹⁵ Christ is the one who stands in radical identification with both the Father and humanity. However, in Zizioulas’ paradigm, the church determines the being of Christ. Without the existence of the church (as constituted by the work of the Spirit), Christ does not exist. If one identifies this relation as

¹¹⁰ Note that he is somewhat selective in his choice of which patristic tradition to follow.
¹¹¹ BAC, pp. 137-38.
¹¹² Note the similarity to the Roman notion of personhood. Here, the church government replaces the state government, but the means by which one becomes a person remains the same: through willed cooperation with the governing body and submission to its hierarchical structures. Herein lies the reason why Barth’s criticisms of Roman Catholicism can also begin to be applied to Orthodoxy, in spite of their dissimilarities.
¹¹³ BAC, p. 130.
¹¹⁴ BAC, p. 129.
¹¹⁵ BAC, p. 130.
"Father-Son-church," then one is "trilectic": three elements which are separate, but together constitute the one existence. Zizioulas, formulates the relation as dialectic: Father-Son, so that the being of the church collapses into Christ. He does not distinguish clearly between the church and Son; rather, the church is identified so closely with Christ that there can be no separation or distinction.116 Thus, while the Son is identified with the Father, it is identification in distinction. His identification with the church, on the other hand, is not in distinction: it is in the being of the church.117 The Son is eternally distinct as One who (with the Spirit) calls God "Father" and is unique in this distinction as the only-begotten.118

It is key to note that Zizioulas proposes that the historical Christ is distinguished from, yet identified with, the eternal Son of the Trinity.119 These appear as two modes of being: economic [Christ] and immanent [Son]. But the present hypostasis of Christ, who once shared our biological existence, is in "the eschatological or trinitarian hypostasis."120 Through the resurrection, he has shown the biological hypostasis to have no being. Proper Christology must begin from the resurrected Christ.121 Zizioulas' choice to neglect the one and rely completely on the other renders the historical incarnation of Jesus Christ obsolete.122

The incarnation was the fulfillment of the will of God, in that Christ came as the ek-static expression of God as truth (a point of communion, not an intellectual teaching) to draw humanity back to the Father. However, this was in order to fulfill the end or purpose of history, the communion of the eschaton being made

116 'MOC,' p. 297. Although Zizioulas specifically addresses the nature of prayer in this section, it appears that this communication process is a manifestation of the nature of the relation in its ontological structure.

117 'T2EC,' pp. 32–33. Even the qualification that the Son is homoousios with the Father is not intended to indicate unity between Father and Son: it is simply to clarify that the Son is not a creature, but is God.

118 'BAC,' pp. 48–49.

119 'BAC,' pp. 54–55. One must ask why Zizioulas chooses "is identified with" rather than "is" at this point. Such wording suggests a distinction between the Son and Jesus Christ and again raises questions as to how well he adheres to the Chalcedonian creed.

120 'BAC,' p. 55, footnote 49.

121 From this, we must assume that Christ now exists in eternity without a biological element and the incarnation had a temporary role which is seen in the light of the resurrection in assuming, and overcoming the limitation of biological existence in bringing humanity into an ecclesial existence. Perhaps the limited nature of the incarnation, with the constraint of biological hypostasis, leads Zizioulas to propose that the revelation known through the economic Trinity is inadequate and to favor in its stead the eternal, eschatological hypostasis. However, it was prior to the resurrection that Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

122 He rejects the biological in preference to the eschatological.
present. Therefore, the incarnate Christ was the personification of the eternal and final will of God in achieving full communion. His role in past history is completed. He is now the eikon who brings the future state into the present. Christ now has personal existence, but he is not an individual. His personal existence is constituted in his relationship with his body, the church, which is, in turn, constituted by the Spirit. Thus, Christ is the “One” who (by the Spirit’s opening us for communion) is “many.” The existence of Christ and church is simultaneous, not “One” first and then “many.” Christ is a relational being, not “conceived in terms of our empirical individualized existence,” but as the “recapitulation of all humanity, even of creation,” so that he exists as a corporate personality. His identity, then, is conditioned by the existence of the “many” who, by the work of the Spirit become relational, and corporately exist as the body (a necessary condition for Christ’s existence as its head). If he is not connected with the church in history, he is not Christ. He exists as Christ in the incorporation of the “many” into the triune life. Hence, one cannot discuss the existence of Christ without addressing the existence of the church.

In answer to the question “How do we know God?” Zizioulas says, we know God through Christ in the church not by delegation—as though knowledge were on a continuum passed from Christ to the apostles and then to the bishops in a linear-historical fashion. According to Zizioulas, knowledge is in the present moment, when in the Eucharist the church is pneumatically opened to know Christ in communion. There we meet Christ as the true anakephaleosis of all

---

123 BAC, pp. 97–98.
125 BAC, p. 111. “Christ exists only pneumatically, whether in His distinct personal particularity or in His capacity as the body of the church and the recapitulation of all things.”
126 BAC, p. 112.
127 PDC, p. 146. See Stanley Porter, “Two Myths: Corporate Personality and Language/Mentality Determinism,” SJT 43 (1990): 289–99. Porter traces the history of modern scholarship on corporate personality and what is meant by the term. It appears to refer either to a corporate representation or to a psychical unity. He claims that the psychical unity is a modern myth projected onto the ancient mind and that corporate representation is inadequate to describe the biblical phenomenon. Hence, corporate personality is a modern myth. Zizioulas attempts to construct a relational ontology for corporate personality, but merely points to the classical proponents of corporate personality without question or clarification.
128 MOC, p. 299.
129 Though he is still the eternal Son.
130 MOC, p. 300. Zizioulas is not far from Macmurray’s definition of God as the being with whom all stand in relation as the constitution of their personhood.
131 BAC, p. 116.
creation, who is the eikon of God in history. As such, he is the revelation of true personhood: the human par excellence as a present reality.

Jesus is freed, by the Spirit, from the historical past to meet us in the present. When the Son dies, the Spirit raises him. When he acts in history, the Spirit constitutes him as an eschatological being, bringing the future to the present. Though Christ is absent in the incarnational sense, he is present as the eternal Son who lifts us into communion with the Father by the Spirit.

Although such a formulation certainly escapes the notion of knowledge of God as propositional in nature, thus nullifying the idea that a body of knowledge is handed from one generation to the next in linear history, Zizioulas has distinguished Christ as two distinct beings: the Son in eternity and the Christ of history. Such a separation has its genesis in his distinction of the economic and eternal conceptions of the Trinity. When Christ says “I,” he refers to himself in the eternal relation with the Father, which appears to have a logical priority over the incarnate nature, through which he gains an identity in his relation to the church. In Christ’s communion with God and his overcoming of our biological existence which leads to death, he presents to us our true human personhood. It is not a restored individuality, but personhood acquired by sharing in communion. We are restored according to the image in which God created us, not as distinct units, but as ekstatic beings who exist by virtue of interconnectedness, with humans and with God (hence theosis, union with God). Through Christ, the quest of humanity to become truly significant persons is fulfilled. Christ, therefore, is not a model for the perfect human: he is the one who meets us as a communal person and draws us into a communion which reconstitutes us as fulfilled persons.

Although Zizioulas proposes Christology as the context for anthroplogy, he divides the Son and Christ such that the Son is eternal (unbound by history) and Christ is ecclesial (the corporate, historical) church. Thus, it is difficult to know

117
how he conceives human existence in time. The being in communion model for
personhood that Zizioulas propounds is primarily effective in lifting us out of
time so as to commune in the eternal. Sharing in the Eucharist appears to focus
on personhood as communion with God rather than relating with other humans.
Zizioulas’ primary focus is not to “be in communion with others who are in
communion with me and together be in communion with God.” Rather, it is to “be
in communion with God in the eschaton.” It is to escape biological existence and
share in the eternal, divine being. Hence, being in communion has little applicable
reality in the realm of humanity and the Christ who is proposed as the basis of
a theological anthropology is either the ideal eternal being (the Son) or the central
spiritual nexus for the catholic church (Christ as identified with his body). Neither
of these provides Zizioulas with a historical human frame of reference from which
to discuss what the human is in the time/space context of biological existence, he
can only describe what a person will be in the eschaton—as partially experienced
in the present.

On the Spirit

Turning our attention from Zizioulas’ dialectic model of the person of Christ, we
address the person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is very important in eastern
theology as the one who enables persons to experience the truth of God. As an
uncreated one who belongs to the koinonia of the triune God, the Spirit is honored
equally with the Father and Son. However, according to Zizioulas, the Spirit is
grounded ontologically in the Father and proceeds from the Father; hence, the
Spirit’s personhood is derived. The Spirit as God is known in acting so as to bring us to God (soteriology)
rather than giving us knowledge (gnosiology) of God. Therefore, the Spirit is
not merely an agent of Christ, who prepares us for communion, but is a person
who animates us (enabling us to respond to God) and incorporates us into Christ’s

143 It is pertinent to note here that in his discussion of the sacrament of baptism, Zizioulas suggests
that one becomes a part of a family in which one experiences the communion of brother-sister
with other persons. Perhaps this is his answer to the dilemma presented by the limited focus of
the Eucharist event. If it is, it would be helpful for Zizioulas to expand his formulations of how
this affects “being in communion” in one’s biological existence.
144 ‘T2EC,’ p. 34. Basil preferred to refer to the unity of the Spirit with the Father and Son by using
the term koinonia rather than homoousios (which implied a shared divine essence).
145 Who is ultimate person.
146 ‘T2EC,’ pp. 41–46.
147 ‘T2EC,’ p. 53.
All that Christ is and does is inconceivable without the Spirit. The incarnation, the ministry, and the presence of Christ in the world today are all dependent on the work of the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit is constitutive of the identity of Christ, drawing the many (humanity) into the body of Christ and creating communion: the relation of beings which become the being of Christ. By the Holy Spirit, the ministry of Christ becomes a present reality in the existential here and now. Furthermore, the Spirit determines the church by bringing the communing nature of the eschaton into history in order that we might share in the mode of existence in which God subsists. This, then, is the meaning of the day of Pentecost: it was the fulfillment of the promised future in historical reality.

Zizioulas does not recognize any danger in emphasizing the role of the Spirit as an eschatological one. Rather, he affirms an eschatological mentality in the church precisely because it is this eschatological role of the ecclesial community in lifting the creation out of its biological existence (through the work of the Spirit) that answers the needs of the present world. The answer is the Spirit's removal of the ecclesial body from linear history, and bringing it to the eschaton, the fulfillment of God's purpose. Here, Zizioulas believes, the church becomes a "compassionate and sanctifying presence in it [the world]." The Spirit removes us from individualistic exclusiveness to exist in communion in Christ. In this event, we experience our final destiny: inclusion into the being of Christ and

---

148 'MOC,' pp. 295-96.
149 'OC,' p. 187.
150 'MOC,' pp. 298-99.
151 'OC,' p. 191.
152 'OC,' p. 187. "Wherever the Holy Spirit blows the immediate result is that the eschaton breaks through history and men are brought into communion with one another and with God in the form of the community."
153 I believe that an over-emphasis of this eschatological aspect of the Spirit's work results in a church mentality that is so eschatological in focus that it ignores the present, biological existence and neglects the needs of the world. For example, the pietistic movements in recent church history (fundamentalism, etc.) have been so heavily engaged in eschatology that they denigrate and ignore the very real needs of their contemporary world. In the place of God who comes into human history (through Christ by the work of the Spirit), Zizioulas proposes that the church is the vehicle by which the created order is taken up out of history. Such a proposal seems to me to neglect the reality of human needs that require concrete resolution in the biological sphere.
154 'PDC,' p. 156. As noted, this answer ignores real human needs. It also ignores the fact that the fruit of the Spirit reflects a dynamic involvement in human-to-human relations in the historical context. By finding resolution to human problems in escape and "confessing tactical inferiority," Zizioulas answers the dilemma as an idealist who propose unreal solutions to real problems.
transformation into communing, *ek-static* beings. This does not mean that Christ works first, and then the Spirit comes and concludes the reconstitution. Both are active in mutually releasing us from the death of our biological existence to participate in the eternal life of God.

The Spirit is referred to as the giver of life. The nature of this life is communion. It is a fulfilled life that requires sanctification (being set apart from the world to the life of God). Miracles and prophecy are intended to lead persons to the Truth, the experience of communion rather than occur as random, purposeless events. Thus, the Spirit is the Spirit of freedom, who renews our existence to freedom in a specific community whereby the Eucharistic community is released from sacramentalism (so Zizioulas claims) to experience the life of the Spirit in the body of Christ.

Thus, the Spirit does not act to create “good Christians,” but to build a community of persons who are centered around, and interconnected with Jesus Christ. As such, these persons are the body of Christ and continue his ministry. Members are empowered by the Spirit (through the distributed charismata) for the edification of the church and the building of relations, not for the blessing of individuals. Thus, the Spirit enables humans to be fully human through the maintenance and upbuilding of the community.

The church, then, is the present body of Christ in continuity with the historical body. The Spirit de-individualizes Christians through baptism to become *ek-static* beings with an ecclesial existence. Hence, we are constituted through our relations in Christ’s body (with the Son as eternal head and having a historical, ecclesial corporeality). Therefore, according to Zizioulas, one affirms personal existence only by participating in ecclesial communion with Christ by the Spirit.

Despite the weaknesses presented by an imbalance in pneumatology, it is in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit that Zizioulas contributes the most significantly. The Spirit creates communion in the church and enables mutual interaction between

---

155 BAC, pp. 182–83.
156 BAC, pp. 110–11.
157 BAC, p. 49.
158 'PDC,' p. 145.
159 'PDC,' p. 148.
160 'PDC,' p. 150.
161 'OC,' p. 189. See also 'ECC,' p. 40.
162 'HCHI,' p. 422. The significance of baptism and Eucharist, then, is not merely remembrance of the incarnate body of Christ in Jerusalem: it is participation in the very being of the body of Christ today (See footnote 1).
163 'HCHI,' p. 442.
God and humanity, thus renewing personhood. Renewed persons are free persons because they are not focused on cleansing their individual consciences and instead can go about the business of restoring relations. Freedom is not merely the absence of guilt: it is the fulfillment of loving relations shared in God's mode of existence.

3.2.2 The Personal Nature of the Church

As previously discussed, Zizioulas believes that the east-west division has occurred because of a misunderstanding over personhood. Therefore, he devotes most of his energy to this task of redefining personhood, first from a trinitarian context and then from an ecclesial context. He focuses on the later because he believes that humans become fully personal through participation with the ecclesial community. In the locus of the church, the presence of the being of God transforms humans into communal beings. Hence, personhood, grounded in the being of God, is mediated to humanity through the church.

Christological-Pneumatological Ecclesiology

Seeking to clarify how ecclesial participation constitutes true personhood, Zizioulas depicts the church as a community of persons who share in the "way of being" in which God subsists: in communion (koinonia). This shared communion is not an imitation of the divine life; rather, it is a relation marked by encounter which transpires as a result of God's initiation.

The church finds its full identity in Christ so completely that "the Church has no hypostasis of its own." Conversely, Christ acquires a body as humans are restored by the Spirit and drawn into the communion of the church. Thus, the being of the church exists only as the body of Christ, the communion created by the Holy Spirit's enlivening work (epiclesis). Although the church has been established by Christ which exists in the historical dimension, it must repeatedly ask the Spirit to come and establish it as a community in continuity with the historical dimension. Thus, in Zizioulas' system, even the coming of the Spirit is conditioned by human ecclesial activity. The Spirit's work and presence depends upon human invitation and is mediated through the church.

According to Zizioulas, history is compatible with the eschatological dimension

---

164 BAC, p. 15.
165 MOC, pp. 302–03.
166 HCHI, pp. 442–43.
167 ECC, p. 28.
only when the latter conditions the former, just as Christology must be pneumatologically conditioned. 168 The ministry of the church is epicleptic: commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit, on whom the church depends for the power to act. 169 Consequently, the church is instituted by Christ in the past, but is constituted by the Spirit in the present. 170 This does not imply that the Spirit fills up a pre-existing structure (like a pneumatic tire), for the Spirit was constitutive even of the Christological event. 171 It is not that the Spirit merely ensures the well-being of the church, but its very being. 172 Therefore, the church is ontologically both Christ’s body and the communion created by the Spirit, a Christological-pneumatological synthesis which must be recognized in any dialogue about the church. 173 The celebration of the Paschal (Christological) mystery is completely meaningful only after the Pentecostal (pneumatological) event of the resurrection because only then could the church acknowledge the roles of both Son and Spirit in mutually creating it. 174

The One (Christ) in whom the church exists is constituted through the many (by the Spirit) in the experience of the ecclesial body’s worship. 175 Zizioulas points out that there can be no priority of Christ over the Spirit in the existence of the church because both are simultaneously involved. Despite the historical priority of the incarnation over the Pentecostal event, pneumatology is neither independent of nor subsequent to the incarnation because it was possible only by the Spirit’s work. Therefore, the Spirit’s presence does not make merely a qualitative difference to the church, but a constitutive one. 176 Ecclesiology, then, is a study of the relation of Christ and the Spirit as together they bring humanity to share in the koinonia of God.

168 BAC, pp. 184–86.
169 'PDC,' p. 152. See Heron, The Holy Spirit, pp. 84–85, where he discusses the importance of epiclesis for Eastern theology.
170 BAC, p. 140. See also Gunton, Actuality of the Atonement, p. 196.
171 BAC, pp. 132–33.
172 BAC, p. 132.
173 'PDC,' p. 157.
174 'PDC,' p. 148.
175 'ENV,' p. 39. See also BAC, pp. 144–49, on “The ‘One’ and the ‘Many’ in the Eucharistic Consciousness of the Early Church.”
176 'PDC,' pp. 147–48.
The Event of the Church

Although Zizioulas (perhaps) would suggest that the existence of the church is not dependent on institutional forms, his formulations of it certainly rely heavily on an institutional dimension. The church, which exists in the ongoing event of its operation as the body of Christ in the world, requires the active visibility of the corporate union of believers who stand in relation to Christ.

In addition to its existence as the body of Christ, the church also functions as the priest of creation by identifying with all of creation and referring it back to God. Thus, the church is intrinsically connected with this world and its concerns. As part of the created order, it reflects the communal nature of the world and preserves the fallen order of the world in dynamic interaction. The church brings the grace of God to creation in reflecting the Trinity as an essentially life-giving being in ek-static movement. The church, then, in its structures and life, exists to extend this eternal life of God to the world.

Reflecting the eternal life of God, the church also displays its eschatological reality as the image of something which transcends it and is mirrored through its activities. However, Zizioulas believes, it is only as the eternal truly becomes event, repeatedly, that the institution of the church correlates with the being of God because God's being is lived out of the eschaton rather than in history. In dynamic fusion with God, the church becomes "an eschatological community existing in history" which is the focus of the Eucharist.

The church exists, then, as a set of relations; first between Son and Spirit, then between those who are birthed into the ecclesial community through baptism. This sacrament intertwines the new family member in the network of relations already existent in the church. The sacrament of the Eucharist constitutes a perichoresis

---

177 See 'MOC,' p. 294, and BAC, p. 15.
178 'PDC,' p. 142.
179 'MOC,' p. 302.
181 'PDC,' p. 147.
182 The firm conviction that God's being is separate from God's act is the basis upon which Zizioulas separates the eschaton from history and renders the latter nearly obsolete with respect to the issue of divine personhood. The implications for human personhood are not slight: it is acquired by escape from the historical (biological) context so as to participate in the eschaton.
183 'MOC,' p. 301.
184 'ECC,' pp. 28-29.
in the body of the church.¹⁸⁵

Thus, in the present event of the church, the past is celebrated as it points to the future which currently is experienced. While we remember Christ’s death and resurrection as real events, we also anticipate the future by foretasting eternal life in the event of communion. Thus, in the Eucharist, all dimensions of time and eternity converge—indeed, almost disappear into irrelevance—in the presence of the eternal God. Personhood is constituted, then, as we partake of the divine communion in the shared meal of Eucharist.

The Ministry of the Church

Although he suggests that personhood is acquired outside of history, Zizioulas does not dispense with it entirely. Seeking to affirm the importance of history he asserts that Christ entered human history to restore relations. The ministry of the church is to continue this activity, not in an imitative sense, but precisely as the current involvement of Christ in the present. Therefore, the “ministry of the Church is basically a projection of Christ’s presence in the world”¹⁸⁶ and it is through the work of the Spirit that the church receives this ministry, a gift from God for all creation.¹⁸⁷

Consequently, the church calls the world to repentance, inviting whoever will respond to become a part of the people of God. Through baptism into Christ and participation in the Eucharist, persons are reconstituted as those who anticipate the communion created by the Spirit¹⁸⁸ in alignment with God’s eternal intention. “The eternal design of the Holy Trinity [is] to draw man and creation to participation in God’s very life.”¹⁸⁹ Thus, the church exists to overcome the brokenness and division which pervade the world. It does so concretely in the Eucharist: it is the event in which the fracturing divisions of the world are reordered and God’s good creation is recognized as a unity.¹⁹⁰

Despite his affirmation that the church does not exist merely to bring a message, but to heal the fractured creation, Zizioulas rarely proceeds beyond the role of the

¹⁸⁵‘PDC,’ p. 154. Zizioulas mentions perichoresis here without clear reference to this relation within the Trinity and, thus, it is primarily a work of the Spirit as “a constant strengthening of the bond of participation in the community.” If there is a trinity of relations for Zizioulas, it is bishop-God-church.
¹⁸⁶‘OC,’ p. 187.
¹⁸⁷‘OC,’ p. 188.
¹⁸⁸‘OC,’ p. 188.
¹⁸⁹BAC, p. 211.
¹⁹⁰ENV,’ p. 42.
church as a messenger. His unfortunate neglect to describe concretely the ways in which the church is to accomplish its ministry of healing in the world conveys the impression that healing occurs in invitation, suggesting that the somewhat limited scope of church ministry is to "advertise" the Eucharistic meal and entice listeners to come and partake so as to fulfill Christ's ministry. However, to be fair to Zizioulas, he does not portray a church posture of repose after the invitation has been projected. The church's ministry begins with invitation and the baptism of the individual into Christ but is fulfilled in an ongoing participation in the being of God. Individuals affirm personal existence through identification with Christ and fulfill it as they subsist in freedom and love. It is through the ministry of the church that persons are re-hypostasized and set free. 191 Thus, he can describe the ministry of the church as a healing one rather than simply an advertising one. 192

In order to carry out its mission, Zizioulas believes that the ordination of certain persons to ministry is essential. He believes this is so because it is necessary to bridge the gap between church and world. The function of such persons is more than mere role-fulfillment in the institution of the church. As the link between the ecclesial body and the world, they must be involved in the community, "its needs, its anxieties and its possibilities," 193 relating the world to God. Furthermore, ordained persons are a prime example of personhood because they "represent a category that presupposes other persons" rather than existing as individuals. 194 Thus, they are models of the one on behalf of the many. However, it is important to realize that the ordained person does not act on behalf of the community (separate from the community); 195 rather, that person exists as a communal person. The bishop is constituted precisely as such by dynamic relation with the community. Just as husband implies wife and mother implies child, so bishop implies community. 196 Thus, these persons are called to the task between God and humanity in order to

191 BAC, p. 56.
192 While I commend the healing ministry which sets persons free in communion (in the ecclesial body), I wonder whether the scope of its fulfillment is too limited. The parameters of the local church institution (in which an individual must participate) cannot begin to answer the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the world which does not live within his limited scope, not to mention the various needs represented in the created order. It is here that I depart from Zizioulas' formulation of the healing ministry because, although he suggests otherwise, it is restricted too quickly to the theoretical world of idealism and neglects the concrete needs of our human, biological existence.
193 OC, p. 190.
194 BAC, p. 165. Zizioulas regards the bishop to be the clearest example of human personhood.
195 BAC, p. 164.
196 OC, p. 190.
relate to both and bridge the distance between them, thereby restoring relations.  

Although Zizioulas believes that ordination exists in a community that is based on love and sharing, he also believes it is hierarchical and admits that ordination creates degrees of honor, respect, and authority. As previously noted, this is to be expected in light of his hierarchical understanding of the structure of the Trinity. He believes that because the ecclesial structure is based on that of the Trinity, hierarchy will create no power struggles. Apparently, when he affirms that the Eucharistic community has no divisions, he does not consider the priesthood-laity division as problematic. He does not suggest that such a division requires examination and revision because he believes that hierarchy and authority are "born out of relationship and not of power." But this is in direct contradiction to the witness of scripture which depicts authority as belonging only to God and all human representatives are servants who claim nothing for themselves, but to be bond-servants of Christ who relate without hierarchy.

However, as is the contention of this study, there is no need to understand the Trinity to be hierarchical. Such formulations reflect a power-based structure and an anthropocentric projection onto God’s being in communion. The oneness that Jesus proclaims with the Father (in love) implies neither power struggle nor hierarchical structure. The Spirit, who is always depicted in dynamic involvement in the work of God, does so without hierarchical distinction.

In the absence of such a power-based model, if the church is to reflect the communion of the Trinity, the leaders in the church need not be above the laity.

197 BAC, p. 230.
198 BAC, pp. 223-24. Once again, this raises the possibility that idealistic hopes will obscure the real experience of the church institution. One does not have to search too far to encounter power-based authority, whereas I suggest that the reverse would be the case were one to seek relation-based authority structures in present ecclesial bodies. Furthermore, his affirmation that the Eucharistic community has no divisions directly contradicts his agenda of reconciliation between east and west. Surely there is no need to reconcile if there is no division. In response to such a query, might he suggest that the answer lies in the phrase "Eucharistic community"? If so, what does he mean by that phrase? Does he refer to division between geographically defined ecclesial communities? If so, this suggests that the escape from biological existence to participate in the eschaton is no escape at all (if biological boundaries are what define an ecclesial body). Or does he imply that the west is not part of the Eucharistic community? If so, this suggests that the constitution of the Eucharistic community relies not so much on the work of the Spirit as it does on institutional structures and the proper formulation of church confession (in this case, Orthodoxy). Unfortunately, Zizioulas does not clarify and his silence leaves much to the imagination and more questions than answers on the subject.

199 Except, possibly, to be the least or greatest of sinners!
If anything, Jesus instructed otherwise when he washed his followers’ feet as a servant. Leadership, then, is fulfilled in service to a community of persons in mutual communion. If the Spirit constitutes the church and gifts the community without distinction, all constituent persons (bishop or laity) are gifted equally by the one Spirit.\textsuperscript{201} In this economy, the center of the Eucharistic community is returned to the divine center rather than to episcopal reference. However, if one adheres to Zizioulas’ proposals, everything (including personhood) assumes a hierarchical nature.\textsuperscript{202} Once again, we find ourselves stranded by a reef of inconsistency. If the church’s mission is to draw the world to communing relations, it does not have a simultaneous mission to send the few to disseminate information or to build hierarchical institutions.\textsuperscript{203} Referring to Zizioulas’ own assertion, the church is to overcome any dichotomy between church and world and to assume the world, referring it back to its Creator. Therefore, the church must be incarnational, overcoming separation (and hierarchy!) through being existentially involved, not “addressing the world but in its being fully in com-passion with it.”\textsuperscript{204} Again, hierarchy is unnecessary; the only necessity of the church in this mission is radical identification with the world. This requires that the church have a variety of ministries that function specifically to meet “the needs of the time and place in which it exists.”\textsuperscript{205} Therefore, specificity in ministry necessitates sensitivity to different contexts and hierarchy is not the answer to the wide spectrum of needs represented by each ecclesial context.

In sum, the purpose of the church’s ministry is to set persons free from the fractured existence of individualism which, bound by biological existence, is moving toward death. The church reconstitutes these individuals as persons and gives them a place to belong in the family of God.\textsuperscript{206} While Zizioulas’ starting point in the communal Trinity encourages true community, he unfortunately departs from this commendable beginning and chooses, instead, to describe the church from a hierarchical understanding of the Trinity. In so doing, he frustrates the very

\textsuperscript{201}See ‘OC,’ p. 190, where Zizioulas affirms that each person is gifted specifically (like the Trinity) and so attempts to justify a hierarchy. However, specificity has no necessary hierarchical implications; rather, it merely affirms that all participants are members of the community and function in different ways as the Spirit leads and gifts them.
\textsuperscript{202}PDC,’ pp. 151–52.
\textsuperscript{203}OC,’ p. 190.
\textsuperscript{204}BAC, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{205}BAC, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{206}BAC, pp. 56–57.
advances he has made in an ecclesiology based on the triune God whose being is in communion.

The Five E’s of the Church

Zizioulas’ system is not obvious with regard to how clearly its functions are ecclesially based. Therefore, I hope to present briefly a summary of his main points. There is nothing theological about the letter E: it is merely the first letter of Zizioulas’ significant themes in ecclesiology and is a beneficial aide in producing a critical summary of his work in this area.

First, the **Eschaton** is the term used to identify the eternal, where God exists and communion is complete. It is distinct from the historical, where humanity exists with all creation in a fallen state (i.e., not in communion). Zizioulas claims that *eschaton* refers to the true ontology of things, the ultimacy of being. The *eschaton* is a fully personal existence whose ultimacy is brought into history through Jesus (the eschatological man in his resurrection) by the power of the Spirit (who dilates history and infuses it into the *eschaton*) and is experienced in the ecclesial community (as it shares in communion). One becomes a person by sharing in the *eschaton* through the church.

The church is an eschatological community which exists in history. It must (like the eschatological man, Jesus) take up its cross, suffer with the world, and celebrate its identity (through the Eucharist) with God. However, its identity is not drawn from its historical involvement, but from the final state of what it will be in the *eschaton*. Thus, while Zizioulas believes that he has discarded the Christian Platonism of which eastern theology is accused, his emphasis on the ideal state of the *eschaton* and the shadow or echo state of this world (in its historical existence), betrays an idealistic theology which resembles Platonism.

Second, is the role of the **Eikon**. This is the term used to refer to the points where the *eschaton* intersects history. This firstly refers to Christ, who brings the end of history (its truth: being in communion) into history while it is yet

---

207 ‘HCHI,’ p. 443.
208 ‘HCHI,’ p. 445.
209 ‘HCHI,’ pp. 443-44.
210 ‘MOC,’ p. 301.
211 ‘MOC,’ p. 300. The church’s true citizenship is in heaven.
212 See BAC, p. 100, where he says Platonism views perfection as belonging to the original state of things, but he appears to regard perfection as the final or eternal state. If Macmurray’s definition of idealism is correct, Zizioulas is idealistic.
unfolding. Thus, through Christ, we see the final truth communicated in history and can anticipate the end from within history.

The church is also an eikon. This does not mean that the church replaces Christ, but that in the church the kingdom is made visible in history and that it has an eternal identity which will survive in the Parousia. It is guaranteed the same future as its head and reveals the communion of God (as does its head) in reflecting the eschaton. It is an image of that which transcends it and gives its existence and any ecclesial institution must reflect this existence and be cognizant of the temporary nature of its historical context. With the help of the church institution, one’s personhood is established through encountering the truth of eternal communion through this eikon.

The third E is the Episcopos. The ecclesial community cannot exist without this one who, likewise, cannot exist without a community. That this is necessary is evidenced in several areas of ecclesial life. Because there can be no baptism without the bishop, the constitutive act for the community is absent. Likewise, without a bishop, there can be no ordination and so the ministry of the church is jeopardized. Furthermore, the bishop is essential for the celebration of Eucharist, the eschatological meal. The bishop provides the focal point for the historical community and refers it to the triune communion. The bishop’s existence as a communal person reflects the divine personhood, reminding the church of its nature. The episcopos is the one person who sustains the life of the “many” persons.

Fourth is the Eucharist: the key event whereby the eschaton iconically breaks into history. The bishop administers the Eucharist in order to draw the ecclesial community into the true communion of God and thereby constitute the personhood of constituent members. According to Zizioulas, the Eucharist is the event which affirms personhood in the ecclesial community.

Fifth, is the ecclesial community. This is the body of Christ, dependent on the Holy Spirit, which reflects the kingdom in the communion of persons. Only in its concrete manifestation, with each of these elements, does


\(^{214}\) MOC,’ p. 300.

\(^{215}\) BAC,’ p. 301.

\(^{216}\) BAC,’ pp. 137–38.

\(^{217}\) BAC,’ pp. 136–37.

\(^{218}\) BAC,’ p. 137.

\(^{219}\) BAC,’ p. 138.

\(^{220}\) BAC,’ p. 138.

\(^{221}\) ‘ECC,’ p. 34.
the church exist. The ecclesial community, then, is the family whose communion constitutes the personhood of its members.

For Zizioulas, the church is the focal point of God's entry into history. It may be fair to apply J. B. Torrance's observation that Zizioulas has a "ecclesioque" clause in his theology: The Spirit of God proceeds from the Father "and the church." While Zizioulas has not sacramentalized theology as Nicholas Afanasiev has done, he has "ecclesiologized" theology to the point that the church becomes the center of spiritual life and it is the institution which grants personhood.

3.2.3 The Relational Nature of the Person

Zizioulas believes that there are two dimensions to human existence: biological and ecclesial. Humans are biological beings who, by ecclesially transcending this existence, overcome individuality and become persons whose ontology is one of being in communion.

Human Existence

Human existence is distinct from divine existence in that it is created and placed in time by the God who exists eternally, that is, outside time. God gives to each human personal being. Human nature is biological and has all of the limitations which the material world dictates. The creature is dependent on the Creator. As merely biological existence, it is en route to annihilation, the eventual death that befalls all created living things. Only by acquiring an ontological connection with the eternal can that which is created overcome inevitable death and achieve permanent being.

While it is tempting to approach human nature through descriptions of the biological, psychological, and behavioral, Zizioulas believes these approaches are inappropriate. One cannot describe human beings in a categorical fashion, when personal being is essentially linked with others in communion. Because there is no a priori humanity apart from relating to God, one cannot refer to "self-existents," only to created, dependent, relational beings. One does not exist merely because of a shared substantial nature with the rest of the world; one exists because of

---

222 'ECC,' p. 34.
224 BAC, p. 23.
225 BAC, pp. 18–19.
226 'HCH1,' pp. 406–07.
227 'HCH1,' p. 446.
the personal will of God, who specifically creates to share in a relation of love. God's will for full personhood is achieved, firstly, in Christ, the new Adam, whose catholicity allows humanity access to God. Christ is not merely an individual, but is the one in whom we, the many, are brought to God. He achieves personhood by transcending mere biological existence and reaching toward God in an ek-static movement that overcomes individualization and death, realizing communion with God.

The Spirit, in the present, incorporates humans into the One bringing them into communion so that they become persons: self-transcendent, relationally-connected beings—not individuals. The western tendency, as evidenced through art and science, is to emphasize human capacities, beginning with the capacity of the biological individual whose state of being (stasis) is separateness (apo-stasis) and individuality (dia-stasis). Content with this self-identity, humanity has acquiesced to life without God.

Art is the human attempt to be self-transcendent and, as such, it is the human endeavor to do the Spirit's work. Artistic self-expression is the affirmation of biological presence in the world and the desire for permanence that will exceed the "necessity of existence" marked by limitation and death. Hence, creativity is an expression of the human "tendency to liberate itself in self-assertion ... to become God." However, the artistic attempt to self-transcend is void of connection with another person, and so it isolates the person.

Although science is based on the communing nature of the person, in that we are involved in the world (intrinsically relational), it seeks to represent that reality cognitively. This representation is often a means to an end: it arises from the desire to dominate nature and destroys the communion of the natural world. Properly conceived, science is a para-eucharistic activity "freeing nature from its subjection beneath the hands of modern technological man." Thus, a true scientist acts as a "priest of creation," affirming interrelatedness with God's good creation and its biological existence, but also referring it back to God.

Science and art, of themselves, are improper means of understanding or achieving personhood because of their persistent focus on human capacities. It is only in recognizing incapacity for personhood that one turns to God and realizes true

---

228 'HCHI,' p. 435.
229 'PDC,' p. 149.
230 'HCHI,' p. 425.
231 BAC, pp. 42-43, footnote 38.
232 BAC, p. 43, footnote 38.
233 BAC, p. 120.
personhood. The move from death (biological) to a new birth and life (ecclesial), Zizioulas believes, is achieved through baptism into the church where one is re-hypostasized, establishing personal identity in interconnectedness rather than in separation. 234

Biological Existence

Although ecclesial being is the context of personhood, Zizioulas does not dismiss the biological altogether. However, he does not believe it is proper to base definitions of personhood on empirical observations which focus on what humans possess in distinction from the animal world as well as from one another. Such categorization defines the person by virtue of certain observable differences and distinguishes the human from all others, denying the necessity of others for personal existence. 235

Furthermore, biological existence (as Zizioulas has pointed out) leads inevitably to death. While we are aware that biological existence culminates in death, we believe that “personhood” continues beyond the biological termination of our bodies. This survival of personal identity is essential to the gospel in order to have a hope for the future. 236 But is this cherished hope based on speculation or reality? What endures as personhood beyond death?

Zizioulas appeals to patristic thought to approach the issue of permanent personal being noting two forms of existence. He asserts that biological existence is limited and riven with problems; ecclesial existence is constitutive for enduring personhood. 237 Biological existence is constituted by human conception and birth. One acquires a personal identity through biological birth. 238 Once born, a person must act in accordance with the limitations of biological beings. One is bound to do what is necessary (eat and sleep) and does not have ontological freedom. One is dependent on others and on inherent capabilities. Zizioulas claims that ecclesial being is the answer to the problematic unfreedom of biological existence.

Biological existence emphasizes separateness from others because our bodies are distinct units. Basing personhood on biological identity leads to individualism. Here, maturity is conceived of as independence from parents or external authorities. Through the exercise of autonomy, we establish our individuality and affirm our

234 BAC, p. 51.
235 BAC, p. 47.
236 BAC, p. 48.
237 BAC, p. 50.
238 ‘ECC,’ p. 28.
uniqueness. Though one experiences temporary communion with others through the mask of the body, it is ultimately a “fortress of individualism, the vehicle of final separation, death.” In order to achieve permanence, then, the limitations of this biological existence must be overcome. In order to transcend the limitations of necessity and achieve freedom we must affirm the ontological reality of something other than mere biological existence—something which endures beyond death and isolation, beyond the suffering of our createdness. Therefore, freedom from the necessity of being can only be achieved through death or by transcendence of the created order. We experience life and enduring relations when we discover the gift of personhood from God.

Ecclesial Being

Zizioulas’ argument that ecclesial existence begins at baptism, denotes this event as one’s reconstitution into personhood. Instead of a biological nature that leads to death, one shares the life of Jesus Christ and so enters the mode of existence in which God subsists. One is a person, not on a biological basis, but through a relationship with God, who adopts us into Christ’s body. Brother/sisterhood to those in the church, therefore, is on the basis of relationships rather than biology and is realized in the context of freedom and love, the manner in which God exists.

As a part of this new family, one is adopted, granted citizenship in heaven, and becomes eschatologically oriented toward the fulfillment of God’s purposes. One receives the gift of ecclesial being through the Spirit, who “lends” the eternal, filial relation that exists between Father and Son by the Spirit. Through baptismal and Eucharistic membership in the church, persons share in the eternal life of God and foretaste the eschatological kingdom. Contra Aristotle, our conception of

---

239 BAC, p. 51.
240 I refer to the Greek notion of persons playing on the stage of life where identity is a matter of assuming any one of a number of masks.
241 BAC, p. 52.
242 BAC, p. 54.
243 BAC, p. 53.
244 BAC, p. 55.
245 BAC, p. 56.
246 BAC, p. 57.
247 ECC,' pp. 28–29.
248 ECC,' p. 29.
249 ECC,' p. 30.
personhood is not derived from potentiality, but from the realization of the telos in our present history. Ecclesial being is always eschatological being.\textsuperscript{250}

As an ecclesial community, the church does not function to improve moral quality; it does not simply provide a new motivation for self-improvement. Personal being is gifted unconditionally, irrespective of human capabilities. Neither is the church a community which improves psychological quality; the moral and experiential quality of a person may change, but essentially it is the new relations which release persons from death (biological existence) to eternal life (ecclesial existence). "The Christian becomes by grace what Christ is by nature."\textsuperscript{251} The institution of the church, then, neither creates obedience (morality) nor establishes security (fulfilled experience), but provides "the means for personal and free existence in communion."\textsuperscript{252} As such, the church is not an objectified structure in itself, but exists to fulfill personhood and, thus, it meets the existential needs of persons of every age.\textsuperscript{253}

True being cannot be achieved individualistically, but only in communion: in relation to God, the world, and other people through ecclesial existence.\textsuperscript{254} Baptism releases one from solitary existence to communion;\textsuperscript{255} it is death to the biological person and birth into a new kind of family which completes us as persons and creates the possibility of freedom.\textsuperscript{256} Thus, baptism establishes us in "a network of relations which transcends every exclusiveness."\textsuperscript{257} Because personhood is constituted by relations within the ecclesial community, each person as communal being is the church\textsuperscript{258} just as sharing in the being of Christ is to be "Christ."\textsuperscript{259}

\textsuperscript{250} BAC, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{251} ECC,' p. 29.
\textsuperscript{252} PDC, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{253} This seems to reflect an internally inconsistent perception of the ecclesial body. I refer here to Zizioulas' hierarchically-structured institution which is the context for the Eucharistic event, and hence, for fulfilled personhood. But does the Eucharist meet the existential needs of all persons?
\textsuperscript{254} BAC, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{255} BAC, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{256} BAC, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{257} BAC, p. 58. It appears that Zizioulas considers the church to be similar to Macmurray's "field of the personal" or to have the nature of true religion. However, Macmurray understands the communal nature to be part of the human nature that we are born with whereas Zizioulas regards this nature to be a subsequent hypostasis initiated in baptism. Both affirm God to be the initiator and one who constitutes the field of relations into which humans are created or drawn.
\textsuperscript{258} BAC, p. 58. This resembles the analogy of a hologram—in which each point contains the whole so that one can see multidimensionally. (See Anne Wilson-Schaaf, When Society Becomes an Addict (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 37.)
\textsuperscript{259} BAC, p. 58, see footnote 54.
Baptism and Eucharist are relationally significant in identifying the existential character of the church.\textsuperscript{260} Through baptism, one participates in Christ, identifying with both the historical and the eschatological dimensions of the church.\textsuperscript{261}

Whereas baptism completes the individual person in Christ, the Eucharist completes the corporate church in Christ. In partaking of the elements, the whole assembly gathers as an interconnected network of relations, each person identified with the whole. Biological distinction is subsumed in the recognition of reconstitution by virtue of a dynamic relation within the community. Thus, the Eucharist is that event on which all sacraments are built: it identifies symbolically the relational nature of the world. For example, the sacrament celebrates the communal nature of marriage, which is not merely a joining of two biological beings, but is an expression of the essential interrelatedness of the family within the context of the Eucharistic community.\textsuperscript{262}

The Eucharist is also the point where the eschaton breaches history as the “historical realization and manifestation of the eschatological existence of man; it is, simultaneously, also movement, a progress towards this realization.”\textsuperscript{263} Zizioulas concurs with the patristics that “the Eucharist is not a sacrament but the manifestation of the eschatological community in its totality.”\textsuperscript{264} In the celebration of the Eucharist, then, all persons experience the unity of the church in its final form. Divisions are discarded when the one church foretastes the eschaton. Hence, it is more than celebration of future potentiality: it constitutes, in history, “the eschatological, messianic community here and now”\textsuperscript{265} and enables persons to partake now in the eternal.

Because the fulfillment of personhood is in the eschaton, the true ontology of a person belongs to the future as a being who shares in the life of God. Presently, we are images of the future, icons through whom God touches the world.\textsuperscript{266} Truth, in this sense, is not identified with statements or concepts, but is that way of being in the final state: life and communion.\textsuperscript{267} To participate in truth is to share in communion with God by the Spirit, who leads us to the truth (Christ), the one in

\textsuperscript{260}\textsuperscript{261}PDC, p. 152. 
\textsuperscript{263}\textsuperscript{264}BAC, p. 61. 
\textsuperscript{265}\textsuperscript{266}BAC, p. 61. 
\textsuperscript{267}\textsuperscript{268}ECC, p. 34. 
\textsuperscript{269}ECC, p. 29. 
\textsuperscript{270}BAC, p. 62. 
\textsuperscript{271}PDC, p. 153.
whom the church exists as the pillar of truth. Historically, this truth has been anticipated and what was shadow in the Old Testament became the image of things in the New Testament: the truth of the future.

Thus, Zizioulas proposes that the proper place of eschatology is not last, but first. He claims that only "by first having a right vision of the future, of what God has prepared for his creation in the end of time, can we see what is demanded of us in the present." Therefore, in the Eucharist, we participate in an eschatological reality as God is made present to us in history. It is a vision of fulfillment, the present visitation of God. This eschatological approach, Zizioulas believes, is the biblical approach. The Spirit who comes transforms us as we live with the certain expectation of possessing the kingdom of God.

Since the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has manifested actively Christ's existence in history in the church community. Through the transforming power of the Spirit, we are personalized and charismatically empowered to fulfill others through the Spirit. Each is uniquely gifted—without confusion—in a specificity of relations expressly for the purpose of building the body and experiencing the eschaton in the present.

As ecclesial beings, then, we exist as a present sign of a future truth (communion) and the church gathers broken humanity into the promised salvation of God. In this encounter, natural (biological) divisions cease to exist, being transcended by the communing truth of God in a movement of love. Ecclesial beings are those who live in the communion of God in Christ by the Spirit.

Being in Communion

Zizioulas clearly distinguishes individual being (in distinction) from personal being (in communion). This does not dismiss the uniqueness of persons, which is
absolute to personhood; but a person is released from "thinghood" to specific, unrepeatable personhood (as constituted through communion with other unique persons).

Personhood is not latent capacity or potential. It is relational in nature and is established in the coming of Christ to the person so that a human

acquires his particularity, his hypostasis, his personhood, precisely because by being constituted as a being in and through the same relationship which constitutes Christ's being, he is as unique and unrepeatable and worthy of eternal survival as Christ is by virtue of his being constituted as a being through his filial relationship with the Father which makes him so unique and eternally loved as to be an eternally living being.

Personhood is a gift established only in encounter with God and is, therefore, never in isolation: it necessarily implies the prior establishment of relation by God. Consequently, persons are such only in association with, and participation in, the personal dimension of existence by unity (catholicity) with others.

In order to share in the being of God, one must deny selfish will—that inclination to egocentricity. Zizioulas believes this is achieved through asceticism (in the spirit of the desert theologians) which releases one from the domination of individualism in the world. By such, he does not imply a prescribed rule of behavior (ethic), but that there should be a communal mindset (ethos) with concern for others. The biological and material world remains undeniably important, but it is not the center of existence. The ascetic life, then, is separation from self-centeredness and, therefore, it summons persons not to monasteries, but to the Eucharist. Extricated from self-interest, a person is free for others and reconstituted; hence, one acquires authentic personhood only in the mode of existence in which God subsists as a being. This is first fulfilled by Christ, then offered in Christ's

---

279 'HCHI,' p. 415.
280 BAC, pp. 46–49. Zizioulas refers to the "only-begotten" of the Son as an affirmation of the uniqueness of persons. See also 'OC,' p. 191.
281 'HCHI,' p. 437.
282 BAC, pp. 36–37.
283 'PGC3,' p. 37. See 'HCHI,' p. 417 on the catholicity of being.
284 'PGC1,' p. 11.
285 BAC, p. 63.
This new mode of being is ontologically relational (schesis), not in the sense of logical relation between two objects (observable and measurable), but in the sense of being which is established in the relation. Thus, Christ's divine being is established because of his relation with Father and Spirit as the human person of the Trinity. Our humanity is not established in any other relation than this particular one. Therefore, Christ establishes all human personhood in himself; he is the divine Son who encounters and re-composes persons. He does not add a new element to the personal resume: he re-unites humans with the being of God such that they are transformed and re-constituted in the encounter. Thus, the particularity of a person is established in communion. To be made imago Trinitatis is to live in the event of communion with God. According to Zizioulas, this is done on behalf of, and inclusive of, all creation by Christ, who calls persons to radical identification with the world.

In historical existence, persons long for communion, the absence of which drives them toward relation so as to relieve their pain. It is the capacity to long that constitutes human faith and the desire for personal encounter cannot be self-attained; it must be a gift of God. This faith is not a mere psychological longing, but is that ontological element which induces a yearning for life and a fear of death.

In communion, one experiences life through interconnectedness with others and the fulfillment that leads to freedom. Withness is essential to the identity of persons. Thus, constitution as persons (hypostasis) is in going out (ekstasis) and connecting with others in a reciprocal manner. Personal being is a way of relating. This relationship occurs as an act, namely, the involvement of persons with others. One breaks through the boundaries of biological existence.

286 BAC, pp. 55–56.
288 'HCHI,' p. 436.
289 BAC, pp. 105–06.
290 'HCHI,' p. 446.
291 'HCHI,' pp. 421–22.
292 'HCHI,' p. 422.
293 'HCHI,' p. 408.
294 'MOC,' p. 299.

Zizioulas attempts to clarify the term "relationship" as used in ministry, but only appears to make the same distinction (that it is not an abstract and logical relatio) as he does in the broader application. Here (finally) Zizioulas hints that that communing might be more than a mystical encounter in the Eucharist in which one is informed that one has tasted the eternal life of God. To this point, his concern has been orthodoxy (right beliefs about the nature of God and, hence our own). Macmurray, in contrast, is concerned for orthopraxy (right acts). Here, it appears,
and communes with the other. In this movement to communion, one is free. If one attempts to have a hypostasis (being) without ek-stasis (going-out), one is individualistic—or, religiously speaking, pietistic—and is isolated. If one attempts ek-stasis without hypostasis, the goal is a mystical escape from the body, as in Greek mythical religions. Only in balance, being in relation, can one be a person affirming personal identity and particularity in the horizon of relational existence to others. Thus, personhood is always dynamic, never a static entity or a waiting stance of separation. Even in the physical absence of another person, presence is communicated and brings a personal relation. (Because humans are not limited to substantial definitions of being (ousia), Zizioulas believes one can refer to the presence (par-ousia) of a person even with the absence of that person’s body.) Whereas Macmurray holds that self-transcendence, as personal presence, is inseparable from intentional acts through the body, Zizioulas contends that a person can be present to another exclusive of any substantial (or bodily) presence. Anderson appropriately criticizes Zizioulas when he says that absence here must be bound to a historical reference if it is presence. For example, the presence of Jesus to us is based on the specific absence of [the historical] Jesus who is now the risen Lord. Presence without a historical reference point is a mystical concept.

However, the truth of personhood requires the presence of another as a mirror, in and through whom one understands personhood. Thus, the Father knows

---

Zizioulas and Macmurray might find common ground. However, it must be noted that ”act” is an infrequent term in Zizioulas’ works.

296 ‘HCHI,’ p. 409.
297 BAC, p. 53, footnote 47.
298 BAC, p. 106.
299 ‘HCHI,’ pp. 411-15, 420--22. He appears to believe in an “ontology of pure presence.” I wonder if the presence he describes may not simply be the combination of recollection and anticipation converging in the present moment. If I am waiting for someone in a cafe and intimate that this person is in some manner present, it is because my memory of the person allows me to conjure an image of that person and my expectation that the other will be here leads me to anticipate that particular person’s arrival. Thus, presence is a function of mental construct which I hesitate to describe as “personal presence.”
300 ‘HCHI,’ p. 415, footnote 1.
301 Anderson, Historical Transcendence, p. 304, footnote 74. See also Anderson, Being Human, p. 177, in which a quotation by Anderson has a crucial spelling error, “Personhood thus proves to be in this word [sic]—through man—but not of this world.” The term “word” reads “world” in the original SJT article. If personhood were made transcendent and present to us through the word (or Word) coming into the historical context in some form of communication, it would confirm the historicity of personal presence rather than proposing an unseen and unmediated reality in the world.
302 BAC, pp. 100-01.
himself through the Son and the Son knows himself as the Son of the Father; there is no identity in isolation. While the persons of the Trinity have their true ontology at present (they exist in eternity), human personhood is yet to be realized. The true ontology of human personhood lies in the future and is foretasted now only through Christ. Fulfilled communion belongs to the eschatological existence which, through ecclesial existence, nourishes and maintains persons in the present.\textsuperscript{303}

Zizioulas' concept of the person leaves much to be explained. His insistence on the eschatological character of true personhood excludes discussion of existence in marriage, family, and society. Because the church is the sole focus for formulations of personhood, it disallows anything other than a mystical communion with God which (somehow) affects relations with other humans and creation. Such a context places the issue of personhood on a plane outside of the wider scope of human experience. Thus, personhood is defined in theoretical language that does not appear to relate to earthly experience—except that it is affirmed in the Eucharist.

\textsuperscript{303} B\textit{AC}, p. 62.
Personal Existence in the Theology of Karl Barth

This chapter demonstrates how Karl Barth provides a Christological foundation for understanding personhood. He bases his methodology on the actuality of God in Christ which is shared with humans. Therefore he regards freedom to be the gift of participation in the accomplished and ongoing life of God.

In Barth's theology, his ontology of human personhood is linked inseparably to the personhood of God revealed in Christ. He seeks to articulate the Word of God accurately, unsubsumed to cultural thought forms. This is particularly true with reference to the term person, which he is disinclined to use if it leads the reader to anthropomorphize God's personhood. He believes it is inappropriate to first define the term and then subsequently to describe God as a person because the term can only be used accurately in reference to God. When applied to the creature, personhood can be known properly only through Christ, the human self-revelation of God. Humanity is granted personhood because of him and thus only in the context of Christology is it permissible to discuss the phenomenon of human personhood.

4.1 Trinitarian Personhood

Barth believed in a personal God, revealed to humanity in the person of Christ, and he opposed concepts of God in terms of three personalities or self-conscious individuals whose combination form the one, triune God. The one being of

1CD 4.1, p. 205.
God is expressed as Father, Son, and Spirit, and is known through the personal revelation of Christ. Hence, Barth's task was not to define personhood; rather, it was to articulate this one God who encounters humanity in a personal manner. Consequently, he avoided idealistic concepts of God as an absolute personality, a metaphysical idea dependent on human rationality. God is known concretely in Christ as one unique personal God, who exists as a single "I" or ego constituted by three interrelated expressions which exist in, for, and with each other as a unified personal being. To know God, one must turn to the person of God who is seen in the Word because Jesus reveals the Father and the Spirit. "Precisely in His Word God is person."  

Barth's caution stemmed from a concern to protect God's mystery as a personal being. "We cannot visualize God." Terms like individual, person, and social are human distinctions and as such are inadequate with reference to God, who cannot be placed in such categories. So, when referring to God as person, one must avoid conforming God to (warped) images generated by human rationality and Barth, consequently, preferred to use the phrase "personal nature" rather than "person." God, personally revealed in Christ, offers analogies which can be used to understand God and yet maintain the distinction between the Creator and the creature.  

Barth was also hesitant of the term person because it is not used in the biblical context. By questioning whether or how God is person, we abandon the task of understanding God from self-revelation and propose, instead, the use of a human model of personhood. In accordance with the biblical text, we can speak of the person of God as a particular person, Jesus Christ. We can understand the personal nature of God through him. Jesus reveals God as a being who loves in freedom. The theologian must interpret this person through the scriptural witness, but cannot determine a priori whether God has personality or is a person by virtue of criteria derived from the human.  

Nevertheless, Barth is not opposed to using the term person to describe the
Trinity, though he stresses that the term cannot be used arbitrarily. God is the one who loves, seeks, and creates fellowship with us as a knowing, willing, acting "I." The term must be understood consistently to mean that God is the person; only then can one critically assess whether humans are persons, and if so, ask the question "why?" The real person is not man but God. Furthermore, God is the original "I" who creates the ground for human personhood. Only God experiences fellowship without a "Thou." All others depend on God's I-ness to establish Thou-ness in the encounter which establishes personhood. In freedom, God came as true person and gifted us with personhood in loving encounter. "Therefore, to be a person means really and fundamentally to be what God is, to be, that is, the One who loves in God's way." We are constrained, then, to look at Christ so as to understand personhood properly.

For Barth, God is a unified being with distinctions within that unity. This person is the unity who meets us in revelation as Father, Son, and Spirit. When Barth uses the term person, he refers to unity rather than to distinction (as Zizioulas does). God's "being in person" originates in the unity of the Trinity as an "I," as a particular being who is known in the free, loving act of Jesus. Jesus is the one mode of the being of God through whom the Father and Spirit are present "in person." The Father and the Spirit are neither distant nor hidden, but are revealed specifically in Christ. Thus, the unity of the Trinity is unveiled in the single event of revelation, not as three simultaneous events or three consecutive manifestations of the one God.

The description of God as one being does not convey the notion that there is one substantial reality common to the members of the Trinity which provides

---

11 CD 1.1, p. 138. See 2.1 p. 285, "We are speaking only in feeble images and echoes of the person of God when we describe man as a person, as an individual."
12 CD 2.1, p. 272.
14 CD 2.1, p. 300. For Barth, the unity is not to be found in the substance of God, but in the singularity of the person of Christ who reveals the Father and the Spirit. The relational being of God is known in the unity of the revealing person of the Son. Thus, the personhood of God is held together, the distinctions being seen in and through the divine focal point of Christ. There are three persons seen through the one.
15 Gunton, Being and Becoming, pp. 139–41. "It is precisely when he is using "person" language that Barth wishes . . . to stress the unity rather than the multiplicity of God." See CD 1.1, p. 350. God, in the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit, meets us as the One who "addresses us and deals with us as Thou." (CD 2.1, p. 297).
16 CD 2.1, p. 268. For Barth, the unity is to be found in the substance of God, but in the singularity of the person of Christ who reveals the Father and the Spirit. The relational being of God is known in the unity of the revealing person of the Son. Thus, the personhood of God is held together, the distinctions being seen in and through the divine focal point of Christ. There are three persons seen through the one.
the unity of God. Rather, it should be understood as actuality. The actuality of God necessitates the threeness of the Trinity which, in interpenetration and love, subsists as a unity. The threefold repetition within God constitutes the unified whole of God’s being as one Lord. What God is in the correspondence of the three is what God is in God’s revealing act: the one Lord is known in triunity. When Barth speaks of the Father, Son, and Spirit in their particularity, he cannot use the term person because it refers to the singular I-ness of the Trinity, so he uses the word *Seinsweise*, which is translated frequently as “mode of being” in English. This term functions similarly to the word “person” when it is understood in a relational sense akin to Macmurray and Zizioulas. The Father exists as the Father of the Son; the Son exists as the Son of the Father; and the Spirit exists as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. God, therefore, exists as the differentiated modes within one personal being (actuality).

Barth’s translators believed that the Trinity could be identified better with the term “way of being” so as to avoid confusion with modalism. Barth specifically challenges the idea of three centers of consciousness, or three personalities. Furthermore, he believes the term person is confused too easily with personality. God’s “way of being”—known in Christ—is a relationally constituted, distinct being. The “way of being” called the Spirit is Another who comes as that distinct one through whom the Father and Son commune with the church. The “way of being” called the Father is the distinct one who has sent Son and Spirit and is present in the world with and through them. Each is distinct within the unified circle of being which constitutes the one God.

Although Barth believes that each of the three “ways of being” are constituted relationally, he avoids referring to three persons within the one personal God because of the easy potential conception here of distinct individuals. But Barth means to refer to what we are referring to as person. It is, therefore, appropriate to affirm that Barth believes in three persons in the one personal God. He is not a

19 *CD* 1.1, pp. 349–51.
20 *CD* 1.1, p. 371.
21 Though they are different and showing their distinctions is a primary task of this thesis.
22 *CD* 4.1, p. 205.
23 *CD* 1.1, p. viii.
24 Macmurray’s definitions—that personhood refers to our being in relation and personality to being in distinction—are helpful in dissolving the confusion.
25 Barth admitted that *Seinsweise* could refer to what is here meant by person, but wanted to avoid confusion (*CD* 1.1, p. 359). See also *CD* 2.1, p. 297.
modalist: he merely challenges the common use of terms so as to ensure that they are used properly of God.  

When he refers to the persons of the Trinity mutually indwelling one another, he does not conceive of spatial juxtaposition; rather, he conceives of "in-existing" and adopts the doctrine of perichoresis from the early church to depict this being in relation.  

God's personal existence is known only as each exists through the other.  

What God is in the inward dynamic of perichoresis, humanity is only because of God's activity. God can exist without humanity, but humanity exists as a dependent Thou by an act of God's freedom to establish humanity as a covenant-partner. Hence, God originally is a being structured as a relationship; humanity is gifted with being in relation.

Perichoresis, used of God, becomes a paradigm for personhood and clarifies human understanding of God, who lives in togetherness within and with humanity. It also describes humanity as God's creation who lives in togetherness. This being of God is known only in the act of God's revelation. Humans only speak of God because God's being is in God's act. In personal activity, God graciously extends Godself toward the world in freedom, relating to that which is made to correspond to God's way of being. We know God as the One who freely loves us. Were it not for the freely given love of God we would not know God, who seeks fellowship with us and thereby makes us a Thou. Herein lies our personhood: it is not because of human capacity, or ecclesial capacity, but because of our correspondence to God who encounters us.

God, then, is a personal being as the original, free subject; the "I" in all I-Thou relations—not as a solitary being, but inclusive of differentiation and relationship within this One being. This intra-trinitarian self-encounter is actualized as I-Thou (especially revealed in the Father-Son relation) and is the basis for God's creation of humanity as a Thou responding to the divine I. These relationships of correspondence are the bases of the analogies, especially the analogia relationis, which Barth employs in speaking appropriately about God and subsequently about humanity.

---

26 Torrance, Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian, p. 196.
27 CD 1.1, p. 370.
28 CD 3.4, p. 32. See also CD 4.1, pp. 201-03.
29 See Jüngel, God's Being is in Becoming, pp. 25-41, 63-66.
30 TT, p. 57.
32 Jüngel, God's Being is in Becoming, p. 64. CD 2.1, p. 284, "In the light of the definition of his being as a being in act we described God as a person."
33 CD 3.1, p. 192.
The correspondence of man and woman is an example of the reflection of divine being in correspondence. To say that humanity is created in the image of God is to point to the particular fact that humans exist as part of an I-Thou relationship initiated by God. In the Trinity, there is a mystery of being which is reflected in the very specific relation between God and humanity and between humans. The analogy is not based on a general shared nature of being, but on the fact of a revelation and encounter in Christ.

While *perichoresis* refers to the relations of the three persons of the Trinity in their interconnection, Barth also discusses the unity of the persons within their concrete distinctions. The Trinity is concretely a unity known in the distinctness of each person. Knowing God through this revelation is the focus of the doctrine of appropriations. Each person of the Trinity is appropriated or accredited with distinctions which rightly belong to all three (e.g., while the Father is called Creator, the Son and Spirit are also involved in creation). Knowing the persons in their particularity, one perceives the unanimity with which the whole Godhead acts. Thus, one is given analogies in the world—on the basis of which one can understand God. One cannot invent appropriations or tasks and ascribe them to the triune persons: one can only deduce them from scripture. The being of God is known through the particular and concrete acts of God as witnessed to in the Bible. Thus, it is appropriate to assert that the whole of the *Church Dogmatics* is an interpretation of the personal being of God based on the concrete appropriations of the triune persons, known through the revelation of Christ. Because of the appropriations of God, we can speak analogically of the being of God and clarify what personal being is.

### 4.2 Personal Existence Understood Through Christ

As Barth’s theology developed, he underwent at least three phases in understanding the relationship between God and humanity. Firstly, he began by speaking about humanity for God. He then emphasized the distinctness of God from creation, and finally, he articulated the humanity of God on behalf of the world.

In fact, he became increasingly Christocentric, believing that if we are to

---

36 Gunton, *Being and Becoming*, p. 150.
understand the eternal God revealed in Christ, we must recognize that humanity shares in the being of God, who is the eternally elect person of the Trinity. God would not be God without Christ and therefore God’s existence is contingent upon this one God-human person. God exists in this incarnational union of divinity and humanity and we cannot conceive of God without humanity (Christ), neither can we properly conceive of humanity without God (the Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer). To do so is to conceive of a distorted, dehumanized creature who lives in and for the self.\textsuperscript{38}

True human-ness is defined in Christ, the unfallen image of God and humanity. According to Barth, “We cannot speak of the being of man except from the standpoint of the Christian and in the light of the particular being of man in Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{39} He is the true image of God, unalienated, and has his existence because of his relationship as the human/divine Son of the Father. It is, therefore, improper to build an anthropology on the basis of a general concept of humanity which merely observes what a group of individuals share in common\textsuperscript{40} or is an abstraction based on selective presuppositions. The only true human person is the particular human in whom all others find their personhood.

God has turned toward humanity and has bound humanity to Godself in the Son.\textsuperscript{41} This was accomplished through God speaking the Word, creating a dialogue between God and humanity, through which God reconciles and reconstitutes humans to exist as fulfilled creatures. The Word is not merely about humanity (abstract ideas): it is addressed to humanity (personal discourse) in order to bring humans into a healing communion.

The Word that was spoken enabled the personal encounter of God. The unbroken oneness of the Son as both God and human meant that true ontology of personhood could be known in this particular person. He alone exists as a true person. If we are to form a proper understanding of the term person, it must be derived from the being of God. Therefore, understanding must come because we have heard Christ and answered the question, “Who are you?” out of the particular actuality of Christ.

The actuality of Christ is the fact that he is the true \textit{imago Dei}, the original human in eternity\textsuperscript{42} who was shadowed by Adam, who existed as a provisional

\textsuperscript{38} Thompson, \textit{Christ in Perspective}, pp. 102–04.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{CD} 4.1, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{CD} 2.2, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{HOG}, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{CD} 3.2, p. 324.
copy of the true human. "Christ stands above and is first, and Adam stands below and is second." True human nature is not in Adam, but in Christ. How, then, can one talk of personhood by referring to Adam and the generations that follow? Such is a study of a marred copy. What is true in Christ is what subsequently can be true of all humans because he alone is the authentic person. The Adamic life is a fractured existence based in alienation toward God (and consequently one another).

Because Jesus is the true image of the personal God and the rest of humanity is fallen, incapable of knowing God apart from God's self-revelation, it is from him that we must receive a word as to our nature. Attempts to know God or ourselves from the observer's perspective employ the analogia entis—affirming a point of similarity when, in fact, the reality is dissimilarity. Only in the correspondence created by the Word can we receive from God. The humanity of Jesus belongs to the creaturely world and through him, humanity is enabled to participate in the life of God. He restores us to the source of our life, to the I who speaks as Thou to humanity and thereby constitutes our personhood. Jesus, who exists in correspondence to God, grants humanity this correspondence through which we, the many, find the resolution of our being.

In the incarnation God speaks about humanity as well as about God. In Christ, God reveals the original, authentic form of humanity. The incarnation proclaims that the confusion instigated by sin is not the final word on human nature. It is neither evil nor despicable. Christ unveils true personhood and shares with the creature in order to speak truth and to fulfill persons. Through Christ, we know that he exists as a person in relation and, hence, we understand ourselves. We observe his life of encounter and joyful, obedient response to the Father and, in so doing, comprehend the actuality of personhood. Contra natural descriptions, Barth insists that personhood is visible only in the mirror of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Christ is a reconciling presence on behalf of humanity. Barth's doctrine of

44 Barth, *Christ and Adam*, p. 43.
45 *CD* 1.1, p. 239.
46 *CD* 3.2, pp. 218-20.
48 *CD* 3.2, p. 52.
49 Barth, "New Humanism," p. 159.
reconciliation (which he nearly titled the doctrine of the covenant\textsuperscript{50}) is about the justification, sanctification, and vocation of this one person on behalf of humanity. In his work, we understand his personhood. In his coming to humanity as servant, he challenges the alienation that has been humanity's undoing. The covenant is fulfilled on behalf of humanity through the justifying sentence which calls humanity to a response of faith.\textsuperscript{51} In his lordship, Jesus provides divine direction for humanity and brings it into fellowship with God, reconstituting persons within the covenant of grace.\textsuperscript{52} Hence, Jesus is the true witness who brings humanity to participate in the covenant and in him, we proclaim the promises of God and give hope to the world.\textsuperscript{53} “God created man to lift him in His own Son into fellowship with Himself.”\textsuperscript{54}

Jesus' humanity is not a state of being: it is one of two directions in which he relates. He exists as the Son of the Father, but also as co-human. Jesus brings the dynamic presence of God to be with humanity, overcoming the enmity and restoring relationship. He does not teach about a static God or merely model the right relation to the Father; he exists as right relation to the Father. Thus, “... in the relationship of the Son to the Father, there is a pure obedience, subordination and subjection, so too in the relationship of the Father to the Son there is a free and pure grace which as such can only be received, and the historical fulfillment of which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{55} God, in the complete, personal activity of Christ, is for humanity and its final restoration. He has diagnosed the problem of personhood, he provides healing, and he determines real personhood.

Hence, when Barth refers to real man (person, human) he means one particular person, Jesus Christ, who is a person for God, interrelated with God in complete intimacy. Although Jesus is the only real person (because the rest of humanity is fallen) he shares our humanity (distinct from his God-ness).\textsuperscript{56} He exists as a human person with fidelity,\textsuperscript{57} assuming our humanity in order to assume our sinfulness and to reconcile us to God, thereby healing our personhood.

By affirming that Jesus is a person because of his relation with the Father, Barth understands that the essential being of a person is in relation\textsuperscript{58}—that is, a

\textsuperscript{50}Busch, Karl Barth, p. 377.
\textsuperscript{51}CD 4.1, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{52}CD 4.1, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{53}CD 4.1, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{54}CD 3.1, p. 376.
\textsuperscript{55}CD 4.1, p. 304.
\textsuperscript{56}CD 2.1, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{57}CD 2.1, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{58}CD 3.2, p. 246.
specific relation of encounter as an I and a Thou interactive in freedom toward one another. Only in response to God as subject and object (I and Thou) can a person be fully real. "Thus real man is the being who in this process of knowledge both is himself (in the movement from God) and posits himself (in the movement of return to God)." Jesus is the only real person because only he fully exists in this relationship. This does not suggest that other humans do not fully exist, but theirs is a form of existence which lacks full reality. The condition of sinful humanity alienated from God misses the essential relation to God which makes us real persons. Only as a being-with-God can we be real. Independence is a depersonalizing self-imprisonment.

The specific relation of Jesus to the Father creates an intimate dialogue which constitutes their personhood. This definition of Jesus as a person is to be distinguished from his personality (his existence as a specific human). Jesus is a specific person because of his relation to the Father but had a personality, a center of reference in his concrete human existence. Jesus has actual existence, a spontaneous history which uses the capacity of creaturely existence, but he exists as a particular person living from and for God. His life is a personal act of the free God existing in human form. As person, then, he exists with God and humanity in relation. As personality, he is a distinct being within the matrix of his personal relations and creaturely existence.

What is the point of describing this one real person if he is distinctly different? If Jesus is the real person because of his relation to God, then every person is conditioned by this relation. If Jesus is the active revelation of the being of God for the deliverance of humanity, then we are restored only by sharing his history. If Jesus is the one who favors all humans with life and freedom, then we are real only because of God’s determination. If Jesus exists as Lord, then we really exist only in obedience to him. If Jesus’ activity is God’s activity on our behalf, then we must correspond to God in a response of faith receiving God’s grace and freedom. If Jesus is the person who uniquely exists for God to fulfill God’s purposes and to appropriate them for humanity, then no person can be understood apart from Jesus,

---

60CD 3.2, p. 177.
61T, p. 15.
63T, p. 49. Here Barth distinguishes personhood and personality, both of which are part of human nature. Personality refers to particularity, existence in distinction; person refers to the nature or essence of the human. This is similar to Macmurray’s distinction of personhood as being in relation and personality as being in particularity.
64CD 4.3.i, pp. 40–41.
who resurrects personhood and binds us to himself. All that we are, have, and may be as persons is bound up irreducibly with the one real person, Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{65} Every human is now the brother or sister of Jesus and God is each person’s Father.\textsuperscript{66} Each has dignity, not as an isolated individual, but as one for whom Christ has lived and died. We are persons because we have been addressed as a Thou by this One who has fulfilled all conditions for our humanity. “My point in anthropology is that every man is a virtual brother of Christ, because the whole world is healed in and through Christ.”\textsuperscript{67} Thus, Jesus exists with humanity in order to renew it from within.\textsuperscript{68} In the pursuit to restore personal wholeness, it must be recognized that we are beings in encounter. Jesus had to restore the relation between God and humanity in order to bring personal renewal. But now Jesus has renewed and reoriented humanity. “The humanity of Jesus consists in His being for man. From the fact that this example is binding in humanity generally there follows the broad definition that humanity absolutely, the humanity of each and every man, consists in the determination of man’s being as a being with others or rather with the other.”\textsuperscript{69} The nature of human personhood begins with Christ; therefore, personhood must not be confused with being human. It is based on the determined, personal revelation of God; other studies begin with mere phenomenological observations and biased speculations.\textsuperscript{70} We can be persons only when we genuinely know ourselves in Christ, not as negation of self, but as fulfillment in relationship with the other,\textsuperscript{71} finding our being in the other\textsuperscript{72} and, thus, as new persons \textit{in Christ}: the real person.

4.3 The Spirit and Personhood

Although Barth focuses on Christ as the definitive real person, he recognizes that it is the Spirit who enables personhood through bringing us to genuine encounter with God and a consequent fulfillment of our human personhood. He believes,

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{CD} 3.2, pp. 73–74. See also Stuart McLean, \textit{Humanity in the Thought of Karl Barth} (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981), pp. 26–29.

\textsuperscript{66}\textit{HOG}, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{67}\textit{TT}, p. 15.


\textsuperscript{69}\textit{CD} 3.2, p. 243.

\textsuperscript{70}\textit{CD} 3.2, pp. 132–33.

\textsuperscript{71}\textit{CD} 4.2, p. 284.

\textsuperscript{72}\textit{CD} 4.1.ii, p. 547.
however, that we have misunderstood the Holy Spirit in several ways. Following Augustine, the Spirit has been confused with the institution of the church and the Enlightenment confused the Spirit with the spirit of the human.73 Thus, theology has been denied the true life of the Spirit by trusting in human structures and institutions. Such “flat tire” theology neglects the role of the Spirit in constituting personhood.74

The Spirit is one of the “modes of being” who constitutes the personal Trinitv, operating on behalf of humanity and enabling it to share in a contemporary encounter with God. Though distinct from us, the Spirit enlivens us by enabling relationships. We are beings with the Holy Spirit of God, not with a spirit of our own. The Spirit brings Jesus to human persons and brings humans to share the life of God. Without the Spirit, we could not encounter God and, therefore, could not be persons.

Jesus is the immanence of God in the world only because of the Spirit, God’s presence in transcendence, dwelling in Christ and in us as the one through whom we are interconnected with the Father.75 Therefore, in Barth’s theology, we can only conceive of persons as those who are ushered into their true being by the life-giving Spirit who recreates humanity. Likewise, Jesus can be conceived only as a Spirit-filled messiah living out of his Father’s will.76 Jesus is one who lives empowered and led by the Spirit, and therein lies recreation for all human personhood. The concrete human Jesus (the Son), reveals the being of God free of form (the Father), in freedom for humanity, which is expressed to specific humans in their experience of the third Person (the Spirit) who thereby reconstitutes them as persons.77

Thus, the Spirit personalizes us by focusing us on the concrete form of God’s coming to us. If the Spirit is the object of our relation, we betray the Spirit’s role of bringing us to be in Christ so as to cry out “Abba, Father.” The Spirit actively focuses us on another in order to bring consociation, all the while remaining imperceptible so as to facilitate this task. The gift of the Spirit, then, is Jesus.78 The Spirit does not present a new “face” to us, but is God in self-revelation who brings our attention to Christ.

As the source of Jesus’ humanity, the Spirit is also the source of our humanity

73Gunton, “Triune God and Freedom,” p. 66. These could be applied easily to Macmurray and Zizioulas.
76Rosato, Philip. The Spirit as Lord, p. 95.
77Rosato, The Spirit as Lord, p. 50.
in that the Spirit establishes us in a relationship of eternal life with God. From the beginning of creation, the Spirit has facilitated humanity's relationship with God. A human being is (and always has been) in the image of God only when the Spirit unites Creator and creature in communion. The Spirit fulfills the fellowship for which humans were created. This does not imply that humans are created with a capacity for God, but that the one who freely creates now freely maintains personal relationship. The Spirit opens humans up to the Word and, thus, the Spirit exists as the subjective side of revelation. 79

Furthermore, the Spirit is involved in reconciliation, graciously striving against human hostility. When humans attempt self-justification, the Spirit redirects attention to the Word, dispelling human claims to righteousness, convicting and convincing us that fulfillment is found only in him. Thus, the actual life of a person is enabled by the Spirit in communion based on the free, loving approach of God to humanity and the completed work of Christ. 80

The Spirit is involved especially in the work of redemption. Through the Spirit, the eschaton has come near in Christ and we are brought to the Father by the Spirit in order to partake of eternity. The eternal being of God in communion is shared, if only analogically, here on earth. We participate in the freedom and love of God as an echo of eternity. 81 The Spirit, present in the here and now, enables humanity to move in the future for which it is prepared. 82 We are given the promise of a fulfilled relationship with God in the future and this is exactly what we experience in our new relationship of hope as God's children. 83 We are hidden in Christ by the Spirit, led into truth—which is communion with God, not truth as a rational system. Therefore, personal existence is transformed continually toward wholeness as the Spirit restores us according to the image of the one who created us.

The Spirit does not force any human into relationship with God, but creates the context whereby one is maintained and supported in order to hear God's revelation in Christ. The Spirit is for humanity: its fulfillment and its redemption. One can only breathe and live because the Spirit, distinct from the human soul, freely wills the living being of the human. 84 Personhood is completed by the Spirit, who profits us with the Son's activity in history.

82 Gunton, "Triune God and Freedom," p. 64.
83 Barth, *The Holy Ghost*, p. 10.
84 CD 3.2, pp. 363–64. See also McLean, *Humanity in Karl Barth*, pp. 44–45.
Human life, then, is a cycle of response: hearing the address of the Father given through the Son by the Spirit and (in prayer and love) responding by the Spirit through the Son to the Father. This life of interaction is intended for the human who is awakened to what he or she is in Christ. Thus, the ground of our personhood is enabled on our behalf, it is not based on a human or institutional capacity. We are constituted personal beings because we are maintained in a relation of encounter made possible by the Spirit. The human response (which is also a gift) is faith.

Without the Spirit, the scriptural proclamation could not become a witness to God who comes to meet us. Without the Spirit, we could not participate in Christ’s life of grateful and joyful obedience. Any act of faith is possible only through the Holy Spirit, who leads us to be what we already are in Christ: free, ethical beings who are controlled by the love of Christ, a gift brought by the Spirit.

In this life of freedom, we address God in prayer as an inward sign of being with God by the Spirit. Prayer is a free address whereby the human soul is brought into correspondence with the God who listens. Through the Spirit, who intercedes for us, we know that we are heard and known by God. The Spirit who does these things is the Spirit of Jesus, the One who empowers the Word and resurrects the dead.

The outward sign of the life of freedom by the Spirit is love. It is not an innate ability; rather, it is a response to the love of God. Knowing that God has bound Godself to us, we are drawn into a life of thankfulness and freedom, whereby we hear the command to love our neighbor as a call to face the future as gracious lovers, acting in love, and thus fulfilling the Law. Therefore, the Spirit not only completes us as persons by fulfilling our relationship with God, but also by fulfilling our relationships with all humanity.

---

85 CD 3.4, p. 101.
87 CD 3.2, p. 396.
88 Barth, *The Holy Ghost*, p. 27.
90 Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord*, p. 89.
91 CD 3.4, p. 94.
92 CD 1.2, pp. 380–81.
93 Barth, *The Holy Ghost*, p. 10.
4.4 Humanity in Relation

Having determined that real persons can be understood only in and through the person of Christ, enabled by the Spirit, Barth also recognizes the creaturely existence of Jesus as a person for other persons.94 Based on Jesus’ fellow-humanity, Barth asserts that humanity firstly exists in correspondence with God, but also exists in a togetherness with other humans. Only in co-existence with other humans do humans develop a dynamic history of encounter characterized in the formula I-Thou.95 Thus, humans do not have personal existence without another and without a shared history.

By examining Jesus’ existence with other humans, we come to understand our own personal nature. Jesus exists in that he is from humanity. He assumes the form of this alien creature and becomes a human I. He enters into relationship with humanity in order to be its deliverer and restore its true nature.96 Jesus exists as person in that he moves toward humanity and is active in encounter with humanity. His exclusive task on behalf of his fellows (undertaken in uncompromising, unconditional love) is to accomplish human reconciliation and freedom.97 Thus, Jesus exists with humanity as one who is the presence of God with us, regardless of our alienation or neutrality.98 Herein is the clue to human personhood: as Jesus exists with God and with the human creature in encounter, so too, our personal existence is through these specific encounters. Through the relationships revealed in Christ, we understand human personhood. The original I-Thou within the Trinity corresponds to the echoed I-Thou of God addressing humanity in Christ and that I-Thou relation between humans. It is by understanding the divine humanity of Christ that we are able to speak properly of human personhood.99

Theological anthropology, then, is a study of this One who stands in relation to God (who is for and with humanity).100 Traditional anthropologies merely describe humanity in relation to the created world; theological anthropology must first address the actuality of humanity as related to God and subsequently understand

---

94 CD 3.2, pp. 203–22, “Jesus, Man for Other Men.”
95 CD 3.2, pp. 248–49.
98 CD 3.2, p. 216.
100 CD 3.3, p. 19.
human nature. We only understand personhood from within the sphere of God’s being toward us in encounter. A new perspective is created by understanding that the beginning of human existence is in God. We are persons as the addressees of a specific promise made to us in Christ: the promise that, through him, we belong to God.

Through participation in his history, we are reconstituted from our alienated state into beings-in-relation. True humanity is a good creation of God, sustained by grace; it is also the human history of disruption in both divine and human relationships. Selective understandings of human existence (physical, psychological, or historical) are abstract and non-scientific: they ignore the complexity of human existence. Anthropology “... must first look away from man in general and concentrate on the one man Jesus, and only then look back from Him to man in general.” This is the only objective starting point for understanding the true nature of human personhood.

When speaking of human personhood based on Christ, we fundamentally must assert that humans have their being in relation. Contra popular belief that humanity owns itself (and can therefore act or make claims as it pleases), only God has a self-contained existence. Therefore, only God can initiate the encounter which moves humanity back to God. Humanity’s existence is “loaned,” dependent on God. Consequently, any anthropology which neglects the divine presence in the constitution of human personhood is selective and, therefore, incomplete.

The divine relation to humanity is located in the very specific relationship established through Jesus Christ. He does not create a potential for humanity (a new ethic), but a fulfilled actuality (real communion with God). He eliminates all presuppositions which subsume God within static rationality. The dynamic, encountering God who dies and rises again shatters idealist portrayals of a distant deity who fits into human categories or world views.

When referring to humans as the imago Dei, Barth believed this meant humans...
are constituted by being in correspondence. This does not mean that humans are merely capable of correspondence, through reason, will, or other human potentialities. Rather, humanity is constituted in covenant, encountered in a dialogical relationship through God’s act in Christ. It is not mere possibility: it is actuality. God has acted and we have received humanity in Christ.\footnote{Jüngel, \textit{Karl Barth: Theological Legacy}, p. 124.} We have the image of God in that we are created beings who decisively exist in a specific I-Thou relationship. Only humans exist as Thou for the divine I.\footnote{\textit{CD} 3.1, pp. 183–84.} The divine I always precedes the human I. We cannot be human without God as I.\footnote{Jüngel, “Humanity in Correspondence,” p. 134.} We are not independent I’s who are for God or other humans; rather, we experience true personhood when we allow the other to be an I in personal encounter,\footnote{\textit{CD} 3.2, p. 69.} because we are not mere imitations of a being in relation: we are beings in relation. Even as sinners, we cannot destroy the correspondence we have with God and with one another. We cannot eradicate the \textit{imago Dei}.\footnote{\textit{IT}, p. 41. There is no human existence apart from being with God (\textit{CD} 3.2, p. 346).} Personal existence can be described only as a co-existence with the God who actually confronts humanity.\footnote{\textit{CD} 3.2, p. 162.} True personhood resides with God; false (negating) humanity resides with self.\footnote{Jüngel, \textit{Karl Barth: Theological Legacy}, p. 130.}

The priority of God in human personhood does not imply humanity’s passivity in the acquisition of personal being. Rather, its spontaneous history is grounded in God’s grace as God comes in free encounter and humanity freely responds in faith. Personal being answers the Word of God responsibly.\footnote{\textit{CD} 3.2, p. 175.} God’s acts are unique, free, whereas humanity’s acts are limited, contained within the sphere of the prior activity of God. Faith, then, is the freedom of the believer to respond to the grace of God. Just as personhood cannot be initiated by humans, so the faith response is not self-manufactured: it is granted by God.

As personal beings who exist in encounter with God and humanity, how do we describe the dynamic relation between I and Thou? It is a relation of beings in a history,\footnote{\textit{CD} 3.2, p. 248.} not of two objects who share a proximity (mere spatial relation) and whose experiences can be categorized (\textit{e.g.}, life and death, eating and drinking, work and play). Such categories merely describe the fields in which human being occurs and as such may deny fellowship with humanity (and thus be inhuman). “That I exist on this field, and do so in a particular way, does not of itself mean
that I am human."\textsuperscript{121}

Barth describes four elements which constitute personal encounter:

1. openness of one person to another (eye contact)
2. mutual communication
3. mutual assistance
4. shared gladness.

The first element is a two-sided experience of presence. In this corresponding gaze, each receives the other as a fellow-person. In personal relations, we know another who is knowing us.\textsuperscript{122}

Although seeing initiates the encounter, persons need a deeper interchange: communication, marked by mutual speech and hearing. Reciprocal intercommunication does not consist of pre-determined monologues consecutively unfolded but of dialogue whereby each engages the other without presupposition. Communication is not mere expression: it is to address a Thou with concern for that person and, hence, to be personal in the encounter.\textsuperscript{123}

Openness and communication prepare for, but do not necessarily constitute, a relationship whereby one is for the other. The inclination to help the other (however limited) is an acceptance of the mutual need for support. Actions which correspond with the Thou (meet the other's need) summon this other to fellowship. We become responsible to, rather than for the other, and stand by, ready to assist. "My action is human when the outstretched hand of the other does not grope in the void but finds in mine the support which is asked."\textsuperscript{124}

Finally, personal encounter is marked by a shared gladness. The internal response to the other is the secret of humanity (not just for Christians) whereby one exists in common joy, acceptance, and freedom of personal encounter. Neutrality and external determination have no place in this encounter; it is a spontaneous realization of togetherness.\textsuperscript{125} To be fully human is to exist in gladness as an I with specific Thous who share a history of openness, communication, and mutual support.

Intimate togetherness characterizes true humanity. Humans are created for intimacy with God and one another. The animation of Adam at creation is

\textsuperscript{121} CD 3.2, p. 249.
\textsuperscript{122} CD 3.2, pp. 250–52.
\textsuperscript{123} CD 3.2, pp. 252–60.
\textsuperscript{124} CD 3.2, p. 264. See also pp. 260–65.
\textsuperscript{125} CD 3.2, pp. 265–74.
a "strikingly intimate and personal encounter"\textsuperscript{126} between God and humanity. Personal existence, and subsequent theologies, begin with identification of this togetherness. God's being-in-togetherness (Trinity) is reflected in Christ (God being-in-togetherness with humanity), and finally in humanity (human being-in-togetherness).\textsuperscript{127} Basic human personal being is derived from personal encounter, an interactive response to the Word.\textsuperscript{128} We experience the gift of personhood as Jesus accepts us, communicates and listens to us, serves us (and accepts our service), and graces us with joyful, free, and unconditional love in his election for humanity.

Because humanity is constituted in encounter (being with others), it excludes all individualism. I cannot say I without implying a Thou. I live in distinction and connection simultaneously, never as an individual exclusive of the community of other beings.\textsuperscript{129} We exist as co-humanity—\textit{Mitmenschlichkeit}—necessarily interconnected, not merely as separate, though vaguely connected, human beings.\textsuperscript{130}

Barth observed this interconnectedness of humanity, as corresponding beings, in the male/female relationship. The differentiated unity of male and female, he believed, reflected the being of God.\textsuperscript{131} "I think that the \textit{imago Dei} is the relation of man and woman."\textsuperscript{132} This relation is an \textit{analogia relationis} to the Trinity insofar as God exists in intimate togetherness. There is obviously no Trinity in this relation, but it is a basic reflection in humanity of God's being.\textsuperscript{133} Together, the sexes constitute an I-Thou unity which is the prototype for all other I-Thou relations—all cases of distinct individuality and simultaneous interdependence.\textsuperscript{134} In the male/female correspondence, we find a mutual orientation not based on biological distinctions, but on a recognition that God has created humanity in a unitary duality of counterparts which fulfill one another in being for and with one another. Whether married or not, all humans live consciously in the interrelationship of male and female and, thus, exist as beings with a correlate who accordingly shapes their understandings of self.\textsuperscript{135}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{126}CD 3.1, p. 247.
\item \textsuperscript{127}IT, p. 57.
\item \textsuperscript{128}CD 3.2, p. 179.
\item \textsuperscript{129}CD 3.2, p. 245.
\item \textsuperscript{130}V. H. Fletcher, "Barth's Concept of Co-Humanity and the Search For Human Community," \textit{South East Asia Journal of Theology} 9 (1967): 52, footnote 1.
\item \textsuperscript{131}CD 3.1, p. 184.
\item \textsuperscript{132}IT, p. 41.
\item \textsuperscript{133}IT, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{134}CD 3.4, p. 150.
\item \textsuperscript{135}CD 3.4, pp. 163-65.
\end{itemize}
In Barth’s understanding of humanity, he unveils (through Christ) our encounter with the other who shapes our personal existence. We have our being as ones who exist in I-Thou relationships and we grow as persons within the freedom to be oneself with the other. Thus, the root of humanity is found in this free encounter whereby we embrace ourselves as created by God in co-humanity.

4.5 The Phenomenon of Human Individuals: Whole Persons

Whereas the previous section described personhood in interconnection, this section examines personhood in individuality. Once again, we turn to the specific person, Jesus Christ, to discover true human nature. Jesus, the whole person who was for other persons “embodied soul and besouled body.” Understanding Jesus as the primary reference point for anthropology, we now turn to the secondary point of reference, humans, and address the creaturely phenomenon.

Traditionally, humans begin self-definition with biological and rational features which distinguish them from animals. However, Barth believes that the perversion of human nature prevents accurate descriptions of human nature. Human-derived descriptions are random and arbitrarily selective, subjectively biased by human sensibilities which merely focus on elements of humanity’s fallen existence.

Barth opposes what he considers to be two erroneous types of anthropology: speculative theory and exact science of the human. Although speculative theory begins with the hypotheses of science or self-intuition, it establishes principles (and hence, a world view) that become static systems of supposedly exhaustive truth which deny the dynamic reality of God. In such a context, the human seeks to be both teacher and pupil at the same time, abstracting conclusions about oneself from an empirical investigation of oneself. This form of investigation, though beginning with actualities, loses credibility by confining the truth to human rationality without God.
The exact-sciences' approach conceives of the human as an object among other objects. Here, the concern is not with human being, but with appearances. Ignoring the unity of whole persons, it examines specific (partial) phenomena which fit into a system of beliefs. Although useful in discussing the reality which affects human existence, personal existence is tied ontologically to creatureliness (inner reality). Exact sciences can discuss only the objective nature of humans, whereas theology examines the whole human.\(^{144}\)

Anthropologies that seek to depart from descriptions of human existence apart from God create a vicious circle: how can anyone hope to see oneself and to arrive at conclusive answers about one's true nature? Different individuals choose different phenomena to focus on (the same individual may even change over time) and such an approach to real humanity is to chase after a phantom.\(^{145}\) To view the human as a self-contained reality subject to human perception is to presuppose a being without God and to assume superiority in judgment, becoming an object of one's subjective being. It cannot examine humanity properly as subject (as a whole, real person) and fails to answer the question, "Who am I as a person?"\(^{146}\)

Observations of so-called human nature which focus on quality, capacity, or disposition are merely human attempts to differentiate oneself from other organisms.\(^{147}\) Claims which affirm the right to self-definition are self-centered, arrogant attempts to maintain self-sufficiency and self-control. Such narcissism destroys the possibility of freedom because free personal existence depends on encounter with God and co-humanity. "He is man as he is open to God, or not at all. If he chooses himself in any other way, incurvatus in se, in self-containment, then he misses the very thing that he seeks."\(^{148}\) Misaligned from reality, the deluded creature can find no objective base for self-understanding, and by denying the primary context of his/her reality, dabbles in mere illusion which seeks fulfillment apart from God.\(^{149}\) Self-help becomes self-contradiction when the human asserts an isolated existence which negates the very basis of personal being with God and humanity.\(^{150}\) By observing only those aspects of human existence which are outside of God's Word, humanity records only the symptoms of fallen existence. Within a knowledge of God's Word, fallen humanity can discuss the reality of

\(^{144}\)CD 3.2, pp. 24-26.
\(^{145}\)CD 3.2, p. 75.
\(^{146}\)CD 3.2, pp. 109-10.
\(^{147}\)CD 1.2, p. 423.
\(^{148}\)CD 4.1, p. 421.
\(^{149}\)CD 4.1, p. 460.
\(^{150}\)CD 4.1, pp. 463-64.
the object of human existence. Though humanity cannot be known properly from these fallen symptoms, they are real. By emphasizing that they are symptoms, Barth affirms that such discussion can occur in the very specific context of the real human (Jesus) and this context will give the subsequent discussion objectivity and meaning. Within this context, he is willing to discuss human capacities and potentialities as genuine, but limited, knowledge of humanity. As such, it is studied in scientific anthropology, depicted in human ethical behavior, and observed in the existential relationship of the human to the cosmos. But, if one is to understand whole individual persons, one accurately can discuss persons only as those to whom mercy has been shown through the grace of God who created us and will redeem us. All other contexts are distorted by Adam's fall and its resulting perversion of personhood. Such egocentric distortions shape all the presuppositions of our activity or inactivity and violate grace.

We are "personalized" by sharing in the being of God and living in response to God's transforming encounter which determines us as new beings in Christ. We exist, then, as covenant-partners because of the election of Jesus Christ and are persons, not mere objects, to Jesus.

Paradoxically, God's pre-determination on humanity's behalf does not negate human autonomy, but rather establishes it. As covenant-partners of God, we have the context within which we may respond and genuinely determine our actions. Individual personhood is affirmed in the encounter facilitated by the Spirit and is a way of being with others. We can affirm the reality of other individual humans and seek to understand them.

Proper studies of psychological or sociological elements must presuppose that God has spoken and this Word is supreme and authoritative, if this individuality is to remain distinct from the isolated, self-contained autonomy of inhumanity. We are responsible, unique beings only because God has granted us our own time and space and has acted on our behalf to overcome alienation and guilt.

Individual humans act in response to God and, thus, determine and will what

---

151 CD 3.2, pp. 200-01.
152 CD 1.1, p. 47.
153 CD 4.2, pp. 434-35.
154 CD 2.1, p. 272.
155 CD 2.2, p. 510.
156 CD 1.1, pp. 202-04. Personhood is not a category of objective being; it exists dynamically in relation.
158 CD 2.2, pp. 313-14.
159 CD 3.2, p. 193.
they will be. We are not persons who act; we exist in that we act and are persons because we act. Our acts are right or wrong based on how they answer the Word of God addressed to us. The Word of God precedes our acts, thereby determining the nature of our response (obedience or rebellion) rather than describing the act itself. “Man lives as he acts, and since he does not live alone, but before God, among his fellow-men and in his environment, he does not merely act but affects something, altering, shaping and producing in his relation to God, to his fellow-men, and to his environment.”

Each human lives a history before God and co-humanity and is a unique person because of these relations. A person is not determined by environment but by the specific encounter with God and others. That which determines the whole person is found in that person’s history before God and in interaction with others. Personal development can be distorted through absorption into or isolation from a community, but healthy development is never apart from community. It occurs in healthy relationships within a community.

Individual growth transpires through concrete experiences of the world and resulting knowledge shapes personal existence. It is in the determined world that the person acts and, hence, exists. New experiences continue to shape the particularity of the person. Eventually, hearing God’s Word affects a person and enables one to discover oneself as the partner of God. Persons do not choose a new being: they respond to the determination of God on their behalf. Thus, in our personal history we become actually what we already are in Christ. Modern individualism’s retreat into the private sphere, determining the person in isolation, is depersonalizing and self-frustrating. In this retreat, one loses the freedom to be with and for God and co-humanity and, hence, one loses self. We are intended to exist in free relations with God and one another, not by legalistic principles that claim equality before the law (persons in this sense are mere objects within a system).

Barth also understands individuals to be whole persons who exist as a unity of soul and body. These are not two distinct elements that can be understood in isolation, like an oyster in a shell, but are dialectically and dialogically related

---

160CD 1.2, p. 793. “For it is as he acts that man exists as a person.” (CD 2.2, p. 516)
161CD 3.4, p. 471.
162CD 3.4, pp. 620–21. Barth notes that a fool may be exalted as a hero or a brilliant person be obscure. The environment affects, but does not make, the person.
163McLean, Humanity in Karl Barth, p. 61.
164CD 1.1, pp. 198–99.
165Busch, Karl Barth, p. 428.
166Busch, Karl Barth, p. 114.
elements of the unified whole person. One part cannot be understood without the other. The soul is the soul of a body; the body is the body of a soul. An individual person is an ordered unity of soul and body unified with God by the Spirit. The relation can be expressed in the analogies of Christ as human and divine, or with Christ and the church.\(^{167}\) One cannot exist without the other and the being of the one is shaped by the other. The Spirit creates a diversified unity. Both the divinity and the humanity of Jesus are dependent on the Holy Spirit, as is the unity of Christ in relation to the church.

Thus, the existence of a whole person is dependent upon the Spirit. The human became a living soul with the Spirit, not condemned to be without the Spirit.\(^{168}\) The human is animated directly and personally by the Holy Spirit; therefore, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of a person. When Jesus and Stephen give up their Spirit, it was the Holy Spirit, who had maintained them, who returned to the Father.\(^{169}\) Therefore, throughout Barth's works, it is appropriate to understand this "spirit" as the Holy Spirit.\(^{170}\) The Spirit creates and maintains humans as soul and body.

Soul is that which is essential for a living body\(^{171}\) and gives the material body a being in history.\(^{172}\) It is the animating element which wills and acts. We are soul creatures, grounded and maintained in grace by God, partakers in the covenant. Soul is the element which is invisible and through which we partake in the invisible, experiencing the being of heaven on earth. Through the soul a person stands before God.

The soul is the center of one's being; body is the periphery.\(^{173}\) As the center, the soul is the inner being of a person wherein one experiences perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Through the soul, we act and have self-determination in the corporeal being.\(^{174}\) Self-consciousness is the soul in the act of awareness of both soul and body, the experience of independence.\(^{175}\) We exist as a unity of two diverse elements which can be distinguished—but not separated—and which together, constitute one person.

\(^{167}\text{CD 3.2, pp. 342-43.}\)
\(^{168}\text{CD 3.1, p. 236.}\)
\(^{169}\text{CD 3.1, p. 249.}\)
\(^{170}\text{Geoffrey Bromiley, }\text{Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 132.}\)
\(^{171}\text{CD 3.2, p. 350.}\)
\(^{172}\text{CD 3.2, p. 367.}\)
\(^{173}\text{CD 3.2, p. 397.}\)
\(^{174}\text{CD 3.2, p. 374.}\)
\(^{175}\text{CD 3.2, p. 377.}\)
The body is creaturely being, the spatial form of existence.\textsuperscript{176} The body is the outward, physical organism of personal existence, the peripheral element of one person. It cannot be devalued; it is a necessary constituent part of the one whole person. It is not merely material (\textit{Körper}, like rocks or plants), but is organic (\textit{Leib}), besouled and controlled as independent life.\textsuperscript{177} As besouled body, the person is the subject of his/her own decision to act before God as a free creature\textsuperscript{178} and exists, not as a combination of two substances, but as two moments of one creaturely reality.\textsuperscript{179}

Persons are not merely independent souls or rational beings, but are beings before God, created in a specific sphere as an besouled body, as a free subject. Persons are not merely bodies, sensing and desiring, but are within the sphere of God as embodied souls. Persons are not dual, but singular units before God and become free persons when the Spirit—who encounters the whole person in openness, communication, and service—personalizes them in order to live in faith with God.\textsuperscript{180}

For Barth, one must define all words by the being of God in Christ. Within this context, and shaped by it, one can speak of all the phenomena which are associated naturally with individual existence as long as the descriptions are Christologically conditioned. Thus, Barth does not oppose anthropological sciences; rather, he is unwaveringly for God (who is for humanity) and is, therefore, dedicated to his task of clear, scientific, proclamation.

\textsuperscript{176}CD 3.2, p. 367.
\textsuperscript{177}CD 3.2, p. 378.
\textsuperscript{178}CD 3.2, p. 398.
\textsuperscript{179}CD 3.2, p. 399. This is very similar to the negative and positive element of the one person.
\textsuperscript{180}CD 3.2, p. 424–27.
Freedom As Fulfilled Personhood

Freedom: the state so many desire and which so often remains (frustratingly) elusive. Those who feel enslaved or oppressed often find relief from their distress by hoping for freedom and experience a new, different reality. Do all of the various definitions of freedom mean the same thing? Not at all. In fact, very few of them represent true freedom: most of them are synonymous with self-interest or individual rights. Most of them represent conflicting interests and cannot bring about true freedom, because conflict and/or chaos have no place in freedom. If real freedom is to be found, one must know what real freedom is.

The new proposals of John Macmurray, John Zizioulas, and Karl Barth offer a way forward in understanding free personhood. Each believes that freedom is fulfilled personhood. Thus, as we have outlined, for Macmurray personhood is attained through positive relationships with others and, consequently, persons become free in fulfilled friendship. Zizioulas’ proposal, that personhood is acquired by transcending biological existence through the ecclesial community to participate in the being of God in the eschaton, is followed by a freedom depicted as full communion with God through the Eucharist. For Barth, only Jesus Christ is a true person, through intimate encounter with the Father, and in his life of obedient response to the Father he is free. Subsequently, humanity is gifted with freedom, sharing in a personal encounter with God; not as a human possibility, but because we are brought to respond joyfully to God in the same act by which the Spirit adopts us and enables the address of God to transform us as persons, and, hence, to experience the freedom of God who is for humanity. Discussion of the nature of personal existence, then, has been necessary for each of the three in order to discuss their understanding of the nature of freedom.
Macmurray believes freedom is the fulfillment of the human capacity for personhood: it is only when humans act so as to fulfill this capacity that they are free. Therefore, Macmurray proposes that freedom is something which humans create.

Macmurray conceives freedom as positive involvement in the personal nexus of relations which determines, in a responsible manner with other agents, the future. Real freedom is the fulfillment of personhood through friendship.

5.1 The Basis of Freedom

Macmurray believes that God's intention is for human communion to fulfill persons in friendship. This freedom is never willed by an individual for the sake of oneself. Because real freedom is based upon friendship, it necessarily requires heterocentricity rather than egocentricity. True community is achieved through equality in friendships whereby persons live in a world where freedom is realized through correspondence to reality in thought, emotion, and action.

God's intention of a universal community must be fulfilled through the proper function of religion, whose task it is to overcome the obstacles which frustrate personal relations.

5.1.1 Gospel and Freedom

Human freedom cannot be achieved apart from God, who is the ground of reality and who intends humans to be free. It is only possible as persons align themselves
with God's purposes in history. Because history is God's act, human acts either cooperate with God's intention and reflect heterocentrical engagement in the field of the personal, or they oppose God's intention. Opposition to God is self-frustrating because freedom is conditioned upon response to God. Human intention apart from God can never be fulfilled and so it is limited by contingency upon God's intention.1

Because God created persons to be free through intentional response to God and others, there is no inherent freedom in isolation. "Freedom, in its full sense, can only be achieved when our intention is in harmony with the nature of reality of which we form a part; that is to say, when our will and God's will coincide."2 Macmurray believes that God's will is that humanity live in community and that community is the necessary condition for personhood and, hence, of personal fulfillment (freedom).

Unfortunately, humanity is estranged from God and neighbor and, therefore, from its essential nature. God's intention, then, is to realign humanity with reality through reconciliation and thereby overcome the hostility which hinders freedom. It is in the restored commitment to be in relation that humans personally know one another, fulfill personal being, and overcome the crisis eventuated by the struggle for independence. Human-initiated independence is not true freedom because demands for self at the cost of alienating others move one toward isolation. If freedom is fulfilled personhood, which is necessarily constituted by being in relation, then isolation is impersonal and, therefore, cannot be true freedom.

It is in the context of addressing true freedom that the gospel reveals itself as a declaration of interdependence and fulfilled personhood. The gospel is not a restrictive codified hindrance to one's freedom; it is essentially about personal fulfillment in relation to God and others. The gospel, then, is about true freedom. "It is the experience of being freed from the hopeless and deadly struggle to obey the moral law, in order to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God."3

5.1.2 Elimination of Obstacles

If one is to realize freedom, it is necessary to overcome those obstacles which hinder its eventuation. Sometimes, constraints are external—some person or thing limits choices. At other times, constraints are internal—ignorance of possibilities, lack of skills, or a fear of the consequences of an action.4

1PR, p. 222.
2CH, p. 72.
3SRR, p. 14, footnote 1.
4FMW, p. 100.
It is in the absence of constraint in personal relations that we experience friendship and freedom. The presence of constraint introduces fear of punishment, failure, shame, or hate and, thus, eliminates the experience of freedom by limiting open expression in the anticipation of negative judgement. Constraint forces one to "play a part" for the other, to act in self defense.

Thus, if we are to be free, we must overcome fear. Fear is not the organic, animal sense of "a specific reaction to a particular danger which is sensed." That particular kind of fear protects us from danger. Here, fear refers to a pervasive motive (which properly can be subordinated to love) that leads to defensiveness in relation to another. Properly used, it introduces an element of caution into our practical activities; however, when it incapacitates us in our interactions with others, it hinders freedom. Such fear arises from concern for the self and by focusing attention on oneself, one is distracted from love for the Other. It is love for the Other which facilitates friendship and is, therefore, the ground of freedom. In order to overcome fear, we must practice forgiveness and conquer the fear of punishment or injury so as to accomplish reconciliation in our relations. Often we are unconscious of fears, but they determine our behavior. Without knowing why, we hide in some situations, submitting to our fears. In other situations, we attempt to dominate our fears and become aggressive. In either case, freedom cannot eventuate until the trust necessary for mutual self-giving is established.

Mistrust in relations indicates the triumph of fear over love. A defensive posture defines us as associates who must contract with one another as to how we will proceed in the relation, protected from one another. The only antidote is the establishment of trust (faith) in the other so that we can be saved from fear and form a relation based on love that ultimately will lead to freedom.

In the pursuit of trust, persons often are misled into believing that freedom is
synonymous with security. However, the sense of safety (security) is often merely due to barriers that have been erected against fear. Such barriers imply mistrust, rather than trust, and nourish a confidence in one's defenses. Such confidence is not freedom: it is the mistaken notion that one's defense mechanism ensures safety. This, Macmurray says, brings spiritual death. "You can fence in your soul with bulwarks of rules and forms, trenches of prohibitions and exhortations, to protect it from the inroads of the armies of the spirit." Always, there is death, not freedom, in isolation.

In the urgent quest for security, we seek to gain the world so as to escape the dangers of reality. In so doing, we lose our soul. To aim for security is to imply that one is not secure. Seeking security as the resolution of insecurity is only to multiply the occasions for fear. In the mistaken notion that escape from one's present experience of reality will establish security and freedom, individuals prevail upon their will to reach for independence from such constraints. Misconstrued as the answer to the problem of insecurity, security is that which motivates the human in the struggle for independence.

In fact, mutuality and trust in relation facilitate friendship and, therefore, constitute freedom—wherein lies the proper resolution to the problem of insecurity. It is in the context of mutual trust, rather than independence, that one triumphs over fear. Hence, every crisis presents an opportunity to choose either freedom or security. To choose security is to do so in the stead of freedom and, thus, is to lose both freedom and security. By choosing freedom, we are likely to find that security follows.

A key element in the desire to acquire security is the will to power. This drive, whether individual or national, is the desire to dominate others and is an aggressive form of security in that it seeks to control the Other through force or fear. Domination denies the equality necessary for friendship and fosters, instead, either negotiated relation or complete tyranny. It is motivated by a concern for self rather than for the Other and is the distinguishing characteristic of individualism. According to Macmurray's diagnoses, modern society is diseased by the will to power in epidemic proportions. It is alien to our natural being as persons in relation and, hence, is a disorder (based on fear) which must be corrected if we are to achieve

\[\text{Footnotes:} 15^\text{RE, p. 143.} 16^\text{RE, p. 144.} 17^\text{CF, p. 20.} 18^\text{CF, p. 106.} 19^\text{FPN, p. 193.} 20^\text{FMW, p. 59.}\]
In order to attain freedom, one must overcome those elements which lead to the deterioration of personal relations. Because proper relations are facilitated by open mutual self-expression, these obstacles present themselves in the form of constrained communication between persons. If we cannot express our thoughts and feelings to other people, we cannot live in free communion with them.\textsuperscript{22}

### 5.1.3 Reality and Freedom

Macmurray asserts that “Freedom depends on reality—that is the inner spirit, the organizing thought of all I have to say.”\textsuperscript{23} He affirms that the world in which we act is the context wherein freedom is possible. As such, it is not a state of mind; rather, it is a state of relation. The manner in which we live in the existent world and reflect on life determines the reality of freedom because “Only real people can be free.”\textsuperscript{24} Those who live discovering, experiencing failures and joys, and learning about the world, overcome the fear that would otherwise enslave them. Such persons openly engage with the world and correspond to reality in their pursuit of truth. As Macmurray points out, “It is the knowledge of the truth that sets men free.”\textsuperscript{25}

Religion’s primary task, then, is to help people distinguish between reality and unreality in their relations in order that they may be free. This process of integrating the inner world of reflection and the outer world of experience demands personal integrity rather than moral goodness. An integrated person unites reflection and action, motive and intention. Action, then, is "moral and spontaneous, and consequently free."\textsuperscript{26} Persons are therefore free in right actions in the real world.

Integrated internal reality which corresponds with external reality is real faith. It not as a matter of opinion, but is positive, spontaneous engagement with the real Other. We may ask “How can anything be unreal?” Things are unreal when in abstraction, that is, when thoughts and feelings do not correspond with the world.\textsuperscript{27} The modern dilemma is that people delude themselves regarding reality.\textsuperscript{28} Faith is

\textsuperscript{21}FPN, p. 193. See also FMW, p. 61, “every real expression of life has its counterfeit, its imitation, which is based on fear; and fear is the disease, the one root-disease of human life.”
\textsuperscript{22}FMW, p. 207.
\textsuperscript{23}FMW, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{24}FMW, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{25}CH, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{26}PR, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{27}FMW, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{28}FMW, p. 24.
lost when persons recede into the isolated monasteries of the mind and depart from emotional, interactive involvement with others. Thus, humans have discarded their ability to value properly and correspond with reality such that faith is mere opinion.

Believing God exists has come to mean "this is the opinion I have chosen" regardless of reality. Such a notion isolates individuals in their own form of reality—a distinct set of opinionated conclusions about the world—and is not engagement with reality at all. Indeed, it is a recipe for chaos. It is inevitable that individual interests conflict when each person claims authority based on the private reality of the mind.

It is, therefore, imperative that we distinguish between reality (the actual world) and our beliefs about reality (the private, mental perception of reality). It is fallacious to assume that beliefs and reality are the same thing when, in fact, many beliefs are based on (subjective) illusion. However, it is what we perceive reality to be that determines our behaviour and controls our lives. If we believe we are loved, we act in free response; if we believe we are disliked, we retreat in self-defense. "We live by what we think is real, and if what we think is real isn't real, then so much the worse." Thus our beliefs become our private reality and potentially either poison or enrich our relations.

Macmurray asserts that we have two kinds of beliefs: real beliefs (verifiable in the real world) and professed beliefs (what one thinks one believes). In order to be free, we must challenge our professed beliefs constantly so as to ensure that they reflect reality. Similarly, we can have real feelings (how we respond to and value the world) and professed feelings. One may say "I love this person" and not reflect reality. Merely vocalizing the words does not necessitate that the words are true. The seduction of unreality bids us to camouflage real feelings in hopes of undoing unpleasant realities through deceit (whether to self or others). However much we pretend, what is unreal cannot become real and vice versa what is real cannot be unreal. Hence, "When we take something unreal to be real, we think that something is what it is not. There are many things which seem to be what they are not and which tend to deceive us." Although unreal things can be very real in the mind, only thoughts and emotions which correspond with actual reality can bring freedom.

Macmurray proposes that things are real when they have significance for us.

29 FMW, p. 118.
30 FMW, p. 118.
31 FMW, p. 119.
32 FMW, p. 121.
33 FMW, p. 122.
Referring to something as real implies "that it means something to us, that we have to take account of it, that it is worth attending to." Referring to something as real implies "that it means something to us, that we have to take account of it, that it is worth attending to." Hearing music we have a taste for, we say, "That's real music." Hearing music we have a taste for, we say, "That's real music." Until we know a piece of money is counterfeit, it is significant or valuable to us: we assume it to be real. A real job, car, friend, or marriage is one that we value, that has significance for us. Likewise, things that are unreal are those which are insignificant to us.

In this context, real faith results from the significance of the real world. A person of real faith constantly challenges and verifies the reality of beliefs so as to ensure that faith is based in reality. Because that which is counterfeit appears to be real until it is examined carefully, faith is an ongoing process of purposeful discovery of the world. Discovery of truth, then, is a process of becoming "dis-illusioned." Real faith is contingent upon the desire to dispel illusions and encounter true reality and involves a "radical re-orientation of the self with respect to truth." The person of faith is the "disillusioned" one.

If we are to be real, we must have a healthy skepticism so as to guard against deception and perceive reality properly. Remembering that unreality has its source in us, we must use practical tests to discover what is illusion. Illusion relies on the belief that something is what our senses tell us and the refusal to be disillusioned. If it is to be based in reality, this skepticism-and-verification process cannot be tainted by fear, for fear, Macmurray believes, is anti-reality. Real dis-illusionment must be an exercise based on love for persons and the truth so as to reflect reality.

Faith is an attitude of confidence and discovery, uninhibited and spontaneous, unconstrained by fear. Real faith is the spirit of adventure which allows us to affirm the colorful multiplicity of difference that is characteristic of humanity. It opposes static theories which categorize life in order to contain and master reality. Macmurray decries the mechanization of the mind as dogmatism and affirms rather, the attitude of discovery. The mechanization of emotions is conformity. The refusal to trust our feelings (our real engagement with the world) is to accept the prison of

34 FMW, pp. 122-23.
35 FMW, p. 123.
36 FMW, p. 124.
37 FMW, p. 126.
38 RE, p. 22.
39 Anderson, HT, p. 188.
40 FMW, pp. 129-30.
41 FMW, p. 130.
42 FMW, p. 133.
43 Macmurray, "To Save From Fear," pp. 6-7.
the social norm.  

Macmurray depicts real faith not as humanity’s generation of its own salvation, but as its correspondence with actual reality. “Salvation, if it comes to us, must come from the outside. We must wait for the new thing to be born in us; for the new light to be manifested to us.”45 We must wait for the creative word to come to us and say “Let there be light.” Our hope is “… not with us, but with reality.”46 As such, it is a personal reality in a personal universe into which real religion draws us. “Religion means faith in God and communion with God or it means nothing; and morality means faith in human life and human freedom, or it is a mere sham.”47 Real faith is not mere opinion or private experience of reality: it is positive involvement with God, persons, and the world. Real feelings derive from real faith and are “in touch with the real state of affairs which arouse them and to which they refer.”48 They are our consciousness of the world and govern the direction of our lives.49 Christianity nourishes love which is an emotion that is consummated in action rather than an idea.50 Loving cannot merely be thinking kind thoughts about the Other: it is genuine emotional response which impels action. It does not refer to unreal emotion that creates chaos. If it does so, it is based on illusion and is unreal. Real faith is intertwined with the feelings which enables us to live in the world and to comprehend the worth of things so that we can make correspondingly appropriate choices.51

By saying, “I think this is the right choice,” we mean that it feels like the right choice. Such a feeling is based on past emotional involvement in the world. Life presents a series of choices that require a value judgement as to which is the better action in the situation. If feelings fail to inform us, we rely on rules (traditions, which sometimes are based on reality and sometimes not) and the consensus of other people’s feelings to guide us in decision making.52 Similarly, we trust common sense, a supposed natural ability to make right choices. However, Macmurray contends that common sense is a myth. It is merely agreement with what the majority believes is right choice, but the majority is not always right. Real feelings do not rely on societal opinion; they refer to real experience. Real

---

44FMW, p. 66.  
45FMW, p. 68.  
46FMW, p. 68.  
47FMW, p. 212.  
48FMW, p. 98.  
49FMW, p. 146.  
50FMW, p. 146.  
51FMW, p. 147.  
52FMW, p. 148.
feelings do not disregard others’ wisdom, but real faith is not afraid to challenge any claim to truth or to act in the manner most appropriate to the personal needs of the moment.

Thus, real faith guides us to make choices that have significance to us.\(^{53}\) Accurately assessing what we feel requires time and the recognition that our evaluation may be wrong.\(^{54}\) Unfortunately, western society has ignored the value of feelings and, consequently, has suppressed the discussion and education of emotions to such a degree that accurately diagnosing feelings and appropriate responses is difficult indeed. The divorce of feelings from engagement with the real world\(^{55}\) often results in unreal feelings (incongruent with external reality) or ignorance of what one’s real feelings are. In response to such unhealthy suppression, individuals often are obsessed with emotion. They focus on the pleasure of “feeling the feelings” (i.e., in love with love) instead of enjoying the person or thing for itself.\(^{56}\) Despite an underdeveloped ability to know their emotions, western people rely on feelings to guide them in appropriate conduct and whether or not they are real is proven in experience.

Whereas unreal feelings do not correspond with reality and therefore are incapable of fulfilling personal freedom, real feelings enable persons to fulfill their intentions from a motive of love. Whether one’s feelings are real or not, emotions contribute significantly in the decision-making process. Emotions permeate each person and regardless of how well they are suppressed, they are the fabric out of which the garment of social behavior is tailored. The suitability of this garment is contingent upon real emotions which properly express love for each other and enhance the personal knowledge we have of one another. Just as reflection, based on experience in the world, can be unreal if it is incongruent with the actuality of the real world, so persons can be real or unreal. When reflection mirrors reality, persons transcend themselves to reach out to and engage with the world. Completely real persons live beyond themselves in the process of acquiring knowledge of, and communion with, that which is not themselves.\(^{57}\) Real reflection cannot refer to mere opinions, but to honesty about what is significant for life.\(^{58}\) If one seeks to be real, one must commence the process by asking real questions, which

\(^{53}\) FMW, p. 148.

\(^{54}\) FMW, pp. 149–50.

\(^{55}\) FMW, pp. 150–51.

\(^{56}\) FMW, p. 152.

\(^{57}\) FMW, p. 135.

\(^{58}\) FMW, p. 145.
necessarily arise in the reality of existence. Real knowledge is engaged with external reality, and forces real persons to be oriented heterocentrically, adaptable as experience increasingly challenges those beliefs which are unreal. To pursue knowledge as its own end is to saturate oneself with egocentricity and to depart from the possibility of real knowledge. Real knowledge is not an exercise in obscurity; it is the purposed pursuit of reality-congruent reflection for the realization of human community. Thus, it is acquired for the sake of real freedom.

As with the case of interpersonal relations, fear inhibits real knowledge. It is the fear of being wrong that restricts us from challenging our beliefs and forces us to be unreal. Such fear erodes heterocentricity and spawns, in its place, egocentric adherence to society’s habitual assumptions which we inherit and confidently expect reflect reality and so we do not challenge them. However, it is only by challenging our beliefs that we can discover whether or not they correspond with reality. We understand the world to be an integral unity of which we are a part. Our experience of the world results in beliefs about reality that we must recognize to be hypothetical at best and, thus, to be subject to continual challenge. It is only in knowing reality that we can be free.

Macmurray asserts that real knowledge is religious knowledge. He believes this is so because religion engages us with the ground of reality: God. Thus, religious reflection fosters perceptions that mirror reality. It is as persons pursue fulfillment of the intention of God, the friendship of the human community, that they engage in reality. In being real, we fulfill personhood and, hence, are free. Freedom is real participation in the world such that our judgments bring us into communion with others. It uses reflection to facilitate real activity in the world and fulfilled friendships. Thus, withdrawal from loving communion into defensive fear is departure from reality into self destruction. Being free is being real in our relations, valuing others as significant for us.

From this discussion it should begin to be apparent that the human has capacities (real thinking and feeling) which essentially facilitate human freedom. If these capacities function properly, freedom will result. Thus, I will argue that, for Macmurray, freedom is based on an anthropocentric capacity.

---

59 FMW, p. 138.
60 FMW, p. 98.
61 FMW, p. 143.
62 FMW, p. 140.
63 MMS, pp. 183–84.
64 CH, p. 92.
5.1.4 Social Conditions of Freedom

Macmurray proposes that there are two societal spheres of freedom. One is concerned with the means to freedom, politics, and the other with the end of freedom, religion. Religion seeks to eliminate fear through friendship and to build community. Politics attempts to realize freedom through justice and seeks a mutually cooperative system that will facilitate justice for all members of society. Whereas religion addresses the internal world of the mind and its motives, politics reflects an external engagement with the situations that arise through societal interaction. Religion attempts to govern the relations of humanity by engaging with the personal sphere; politics attempts to produce a practical synergism in society, regardless of individual motives. In its personal nature, true religion eliminates fear whereas politics mitigates its effects. Neither is complete without the other; freedom, if it is to realized, requires a proper balance of both forms.

Because of the personal nature of freedom (per Macmurray, fulfilled personal relations), we cannot experience freedom alone. Freedom necessarily requires that we actively be involved with, and fully cognizant of, others. "We need one another to be ourselves." Needing one another, it is imperative that we learn to live cooperatively with others. If we seek to deny our nature as personal beings, we create the illusion of independence. We cannot maintain this illusory escape from reality without being drawn into the vacuum of isolation which denies the necessary context in which we define personhood. We are as we relate; therefore, to remove ourselves from relations is to become disoriented and lose our sense of significance.

The manner in which we are involved with others conditions our freedom. Demands for freedom (from others) cause fear and alienation. Contractual negotiations for freedom are based on the fear of violation and such mistrust hinders personal relations. The proper means by which freedom is fulfilled is love. The process of mutual self-revelation within such a context allows persons to know one another and to be fulfilled (experience freedom). According to Macmurray, love is the field of religion. Hence, religion is the context in which one experiences fulfilled personhood.

However, he asserts that religion and politics are not completely separate. One
does not experience freedom in the field of religion without the accompanying context of politics. As noted earlier, politics is concerned with external relations and religion focuses on internal motives and desires. Reality is constituted by both: the internal world and the external world. They are not two different realities; rather, the one reality integrates both spheres.

Macmurray observes that politics historically have attempted to solve religious problems by political means. For example, the democratic slogan, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” depicts the ideals of real religion, but the political means of achieving these ideals has been through force rather than love. Religion, he believes, builds a personal community—politics, an impersonal society. When religion properly fulfills its purpose, it facilitates political ends; however, political means cannot fulfill religious ends because they must be developed in free personal relations, never organized. Religion fulfills our personhood; politics can only make us citizens. Personhood, therefore, is significantly more valuable than citizenship. Citizenship is limited to the functional aspect of a person impersonally relating to other citizens.

The term in the democratic slogan, equality, when used personally, affirms that—in spite of differences—two persons can enter into friendship. This does not imply equivalence for some purpose (i.e., strength, intellect, level of development). Rather, it denies the necessity of hierarchical structures in personal relations (superior controlling the inferior). It is imperative that we rid ourselves of the mathematical connotations of equality which pertain to two identical objects. Relational equality is valuing one another mutually precisely because we recognize a rich variety in relation. Equality, therefore, cannot be assessed so as to predetermine suitability for friendship. Such a judgement is based functionally on societal categories and is, therefore, impersonal, an act of prejudice. Persons reflect equality in their refusal to require of others prerequisite qualifications for relationship.

If relations are unequal, they become impersonal because one uses another as a means to an end (e.g., a slave-trader or employer). In the presence of inequality and impersonal relations which exercise power over another, the relationship is constrained and excludes freedom. Hence, personal equality is essential for

---

71 Macmurray, RAS, p. 66.
72 RE, p. 100.
73 CF, p. 73.
74 CH, p. 74. See also the discussion on pp. 74–80.
75 PR, p. 158.
freedom.76

Fraternity, the third term of the democratic slogan, is mutual affection in friendship. Fraternity requires the context of multiple persons whose mutual intent is to be friends is realized only in the activities of shared community life.77 In this unconditional, mutually accepting and affirming environment, sincerity flourishes; it is “the virtue which consists in expressing what we really think and what we really feel.”78

By allowing other’s to express real thoughts and emotions, we grant others the freedom to be themselves. The gift of freedom is unqualified acceptance, unconditioned love. It is this that frees persons to live without fear. The unconditionality of love necessarily implies that we do not expect reciprocity (though we may always hope for it). If we believe in freedom, we must believe in setting others free, whether or not they have the “grace and gratitude” to set us free in reciprocal, unconditional love.79 Liberty, in its true sense, is conditioned by the unity of agents who act toward one another in mutual acceptance and love as equals. It occurs in the context of the Other.80

Freedom, then, cannot be defined individualistically; its only proper context is mutual relations. Just as freedom is incompatible with isolation, so it is incompatible with self-oriented power, which seeks to achieve independence and liberation through demands. It cannot be acquired by force: it is a gift voluntarily bestowed in heterocentric friendships. “We live and move and have our being not in ourselves but in one another; and what rights or powers or freedom we possess are ours by the grace and favour of our fellows.”81 Freedom is endowed as an unmerited grace through interpersonal knowledge.82 Hence, religion, when properly expressed, can be summed in the phrase, “I know and I am known [in a life of] perfect and complete mutuality of communion, of mutual emotional awareness.”83 Thus, freedom is bound irreducibly to fulfilled personhood through being in communion.

76 ‘FPN,’ pp. 192–93.
77 CF, pp. 82–83.
78 FMW, p. 104.
79 CF, p. 79.
80 PR, p. 214. Here, Macmurray links this Other with the person of God.
81 PR, p. 211.
83 RE, p. 63. Macmurray cites Paul’s words at the end of 1 Corinthians 13, which he calls “his paean in praise of love,” as the perfect example of mature religion, “Then shall I know even as also I am known.”
5.2 Freedom of the Person

Because freedom is realized through intentioned friendship, persons are free agents whose ability to form and fulfill intentions are "... the defining character of Man; the property which sets us apart from the rest of creation and fixes a gulf between us and the highest of the animals." Our intentions shape our future and we may choose that future by the fulfillment of our intention to live responsibly with others in the mutual satisfaction of freedom.

5.2.1 Action and Freedom

As agents, we are at liberty to assert our personal freedom and, thus, to determine our future; however, our freedom is still conditioned by the determinate nature of the world and by our humanity—with all of its limitations. Without this determined nature of world and self, we could not act, freely or otherwise, because these are the necessary correlates which constitute action. In the real world, we can act without constraint—within the limits of what is possible. Within the limits of reality, the "capacity to act is freedom." Affirming free acts within the limits of reality does not imply that real persons ought to or are allowed to act; it only means that real people in the real world can act. Attempting the impossible is unreal and necessarily frustrates personal freedom, because true freedom corresponds with reality. In corresponding to reality, one acknowledges the limitations of the world and acts accordingly, fulfilling possible intentions and realizing freedom in accomplishment. Likewise, if one is compelled by another, that person does not act freely in self determination. Rather, each act is constrained by another. A relationship which reflects freedom is one which nourishes mutual interaction, one with the Other, and which fulfills each person according to his/her own nature. "To be free, then, is to express one's own nature in action." White concurs with Macmurray that any modern attempt to locate freedom in the independent self is erroneous from the start and cannot be helpful in the quest to establish proper freedom.

The interrelational (as opposed to independent) formulation of freedom does

84 CF, p. 16.
85 PR, p. 41.
86 PR, p. 98. For example, one would not say one lacks freedom because of an inability to jump to the moon.
87 FMW, p. 169.
88 FMW, p. 170.
not negate the need to address the issue of free will. Friendship does not abolish individual will and if we are to engage seriously with reality, we must understand the free will of the individual properly. To do so, we cannot presuppose the presence of some thing called will located in the inner constitution which we perceive as an inner impulse or response to stimulus. Rather, will is that objective human capacity to act based on real reflection and emotion so as to fulfill a practical intention in the world. Hence, there is no antinomy of freedom in reconciling free choice and the determined world; both the person and the Other (in relation) act in correspondence with their natures. To deny free will is to deny “I do.” Persons participate in and know a determined, but changing, world and they shape their future with the fulfillment of their intentions.

Contingent upon the fulfillment of relationally oriented intentions, freedom depends on the ability to do what we want to do. A free person, therefore, has means adequate to facilitate the realization of the desired ends. However, the nature of the determined world necessitates adaptation of either our means or our ends if we hope to increase our present experience of freedom. If we adapt by redefining our ends (aspirations) to the means available to us, we do not experience the frustration of attempting to achieve what is impossible.

Unfortunately, advances in technology have spawned the arrogant (unreal) notion that any end is possible and encouraged people to adjust their means through an increase of power in hopes of realizing their impossible end. A misplaced confidence in science leads persons to overvalue human potential and undervalue the present world. It frustrates freedom by ignoring the present experience of fulfillment in relation. Instead, it reaches for the technological future where a gadget exists for every task and individuals express egocentric control over their own (isolated) world. The end, then, is not a better personal human community, but an ideal impersonal world which is functionally defined and individualistically empowered. Neither empowered individualism nor technological machinery can improve friendship or build trust between persons. The belief that freedom results through an increase of means to action is misguided because it hopes in power rather than love. Human community which is motivated by power fractures when members struggle to acquire the means of fulfilling individual ends and disengage from heterocentric involvements in friendship.

As noted, another resolution to the means-end discrepancy is to limit the desired

---

90 RE, pp. 20-21.
91 SA, p. 134.
92 CF, p. 21.
93 CF, p. 21.
ends to the means available. By doing so, we do not desire that which is beyond our ability to obtain. However, this requires the will to limit desire and Macmurray believes such self-control has become archaic in the modern world. Self-control is exercised in the forms of religion and moralization and the attempt to release the soul from vain desires through self-examination and the cultivation of contentment, he says, are forgotten.

However, if we are real in thoughts and emotions, that is, reflect what is actual (real), we aim only for what we know to be possible. Though we may wish it were otherwise, we do not try to attain the obviously impossible. Neither do we stagnate in the realm of what is attainable too easily. We live as real persons who seek progress and so explore the limits of possibility, experimenting with creative advances on what has hitherto been just possible in order to increase the realm of possibility with each advancement made. But always, our sense of proportion to the world leads us to recognize our limited creatureliness. Hence, "Humility is the handmaid of freedom." Right evaluation of one's capabilities facilitates fulfilled intentions and, thus, leads to freedom in fulfilled personhood.

It must be conceded that not all limitations are real. Some are simply a result of ignorance. Persons may lack the necessary knowledge to realize intentions. If they are content with their current state, they are not motivated to discover wider spheres of possibility. Often, the acceptance of traditional possibilities is merely laziness, the habit of submitting to socially conditioned acceptability. Whereas Macmurray decries unreal longings for what is impossible, he believes we must not ensconce ourselves in mere habit. Tradition should not limit the adventure of exploring new means to realize freedom. In some cases, material limitations keep us from realizing possibilities, but this should be discovered, not assumed.

Consistent with his spirit of adventure and summons to explore actively the field of possibility, Macmurray emphatically believes that freedom is not just the absence of constraint: it is action. Freedom is defined by a thing fulfilling its nature. A stone, falling, moves in accordance with its nature: it is a material object; however, it is not free in the personal sense, it merely falls freely (corresponding with the laws of nature). An animal in its natural habitat acts according to its nature and is, thus, unconstrained. This absence of constraint, though, is instinct

---

94 CF, p. 21.
95 CF, p. 22.
96 CF, p. 23. Note the case of the impossible jump to the moon—people do not waste their time desiring that which is absurd.
97 CF, p. 24.
98 MMS, p. 184.
99 FMW, pp. 169–70.
rather than intentional freedom. That which distinguishes a person as such is the intentional activity of participating with the Other in relation so that personhood is fulfilled and freedom is realized.

Although freedom is realized in spontaneous action, it also depends upon unconstraint and congruence with reality. In the event that one is constrained or restrained by another, and is prevented from fulfilling particular actions, one is not free. When the constraint of fear or the illusion of impossibility are removed, persons can act voluntarily so as to implement freedom. "Freedom means freedom to do something," and only a person can do anything. Hence, only persons can be fully free (not simply feel free). We are free because we are free to act, to determine our future.

5.2.2 The Future and Freedom

The future is the field of possibility and, as such is the arena of our free actions. The past is already determined, as unchangeable as turning back time, but the future is indeterminate; otherwise, the future would already be the past. Through action, we determine the future. Freedom, then, is the capacity to determine the future.

In the movement aspect of "doing," we modify the Other and limit the range of possibilities for the future. Once we have used a resource or moved to a certain point, we have determined the limit of the range of possibilities remaining open. One option to broaden this range may be to retrace our steps, but this is also to act into the future. We never really return to the exact place we were before. Even if our space coordinates may coincide with a past position, we are at a different point in time, and our previous action will have modified the situation and will have limited the new range of possibilities.

In the knowing part of action, we apprehend the Other, providing the basis to form an intention for other actions in the future and the data for our memory of the determined past so we can be real in our thought in the future.

100 FMW, pp. 100-01.
101 CH, p. 72.
102 FMW, p. 169.
103 'FPN,' pp. 179-80.
104 SA, p. 133.
105 SA, p. 135.
106 PR, p. 212.
107 PR, p. 166.
108 PR, p. 166.
Once we act, we are involved in self-limitation. We have determined our environment and limited further action. \(^{109}\) Time, then, is like a path. One can "read" one's past by attending to successive actions along the past in one's reflective activity. \(^{110}\) The future lies ahead, though I have no knowledge of it because I have not experienced it. We can only move from here-now to there-then. Movements cannot be repeated in the sense that each movement is another movement, each creating a determinate past as an act moving into the future. \(^{111}\) Our determination of the future is conditioned by the destination to which our actions have brought us.

Time, then, is a reflected concept, distinguished as the past (our memory of completed actions) and the future (our anticipations of possible actions). When we choose this reflective point we are travellers, according to Macmurray. \(^{112}\) In reality, we are agents who act in the present, choosing one possibility and negating the others for that particular moment. In actualizing a possibility, we draw on reflection and decide the right choice to pursue. \(^{113}\) The right choice facilitates personal relations; the wrong introduces conflict of wills. \(^{114}\) While we are limited by our past choices, at any point we can choose to move in the direction of communion with others in the future. Past actions can limit only our freedom in the future; they cannot eliminate it, neither can the future eliminate past actions.

We can choose what is in our power to act upon and if we choose to fulfill an impossible desire in the future, we only frustrate our freedom. However, if we align our desires with our capacity to satisfy them, we can be free. We may desire little and be satisfied easily, or desire much and work hard to achieve our desire. However, if we always want more and are never satisfied, the future becomes a pit rather than a platform of possibilities. If we want to be free, we must learn to be satisfied. "The contented man is free, ... because his powers are adequate to his desires."\(^{115}\) The free person can face the future as a field of hope, full of possibilities of communion because that person has acted from a motive of love, which facilitates friendship.

\(^{109}\) SA, p. 135.
\(^{110}\) SA, pp. 136-37.
\(^{111}\) SA, p. 137.
\(^{112}\) SA, p. 138.
\(^{113}\) SA, pp. 139-40.
\(^{114}\) SA, p. 145.
\(^{115}\) FPN,” p. 178.
5.2.3 Responsibility and Freedom

Within the realm of possible choices, there is one other major limitation to our individual freedom: "the presence of other agents in the same field of action."\textsuperscript{116} The reason we cannot do as we please is because we must act with other persons in a responsible manner to ensure the freedom of all. We are not limited in choice because God forbids our freedom—we were created to be free. Freedom is the fulfillment of our nature.

Choices, then, are not limited for the reason that they would not be right, for right actions are those that enable us to fulfill our freedom in relation. The reasons proposed by moralists as to why we should not do as we please assume that we should not be free\textsuperscript{117} and are fallacious formulations derived from an improper presupposition. The truth is that we are meant to be free, but true freedom is dependent on others. As such, it is limited by the collaboration of agents so as to ensure mutual freedom for all. If we are to overcome the obstacles that inhibit our freedom, it will depend on "the alteration of the relationships of persons."\textsuperscript{118} We cannot use power to effect an impersonal re-organization; change must come through mutual cooperation.

Freedom, then, is never absolute because it is conditioned by others and, therefore, is variable. Greater communion means greater freedom; increased alienation brings unfreedom. We may measure freedom by comparing the ratio between objectively possible choices and actual achievements within the limits that others (or ourselves) set for us\textsuperscript{119} and the more often we fulfill desired ends and maintain positive relations, the greater our freedom.

Shutte finds the idea of "degrees of freedom" a challenging one because he believes freedom of choice is something one has or has not got.\textsuperscript{120} He finds two paradoxes in Macmurray’s position that are solvable only from a Christian position. The first is a question about how a free being develops in the universe: if one is born with the capacity to be free, how can one become freer? The second asks how—if freedom is a gift that we grant one another—one begins to have a positive intention toward the Other that is not self-generated, but is truly responsive in self-giving? He concludes that our freedom must first find its context in the relation we have with God. Being graced by God with freedom, we have the ability to gift others with freedom. The origin and the continual development of freedom finds

\textsuperscript{116}SA, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{117}CF, pp. 20–21.
\textsuperscript{118}FPN, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{119}FPN, p. 191.
\textsuperscript{120}Shutte, "Indwelling, Intersubjectivity, and God," p. 211.
its source in, and is dependent on, God. 121

As we increase our involvement with others, we increase our responsibility. It is not to be constrained; rather it is to become integrated positively in the personal nexus. We cannot escape involvement with others. "To be free is to be responsible. To evade responsibility is to evade freedom." 122 In community, we each depend on others acting responsibly toward us. Each must participate responsibly with others and live with the actions each chooses in determining the community future. If we know one another, intend a common life, and control our acts so as to fulfill the intention to achieve community, we are free. "Freedom and responsibility are, then, aspects of one fact." 123 We are free in positive inter-responsiveness.

5.3 Freedom with Others

Clearly, we cannot conceive of freedom as merely unconstrained, individual acts. It is always in relation to the personal nexus. Any practical form that freedom takes—whether economic, social, or spiritual—must be recognized as the fulfillment of some aspect of this reality. Freedom is always an element of friendship.

5.3.1 The Field of Freedom

The field of personal relations is the arena of freedom. 124 We cannot have free people: we must have free relations based in real friendship. "All reality, that is to say, all significance converges upon friendship, upon the real relationship of one person to another." 125 It is because we have the capacity for friendship that we have the possibility for freedom. 126 Friendship allows us to be real, to transcend ourselves in thought and feeling, and thus to fulfill self-realization in relations with friends.

Freedom is realized in continual self-transcendence, as one engages in action with the Other in cooperation. In true freedom, persons fulfill their being by giving themselves for other people, establishing freedom in the unrestrained honesty that can exist only between sincere, real persons. 127 Setting others free is not an exercise

122FPN, p. 177.
123PR, p. 119.
124RE, pp. 105–06.
125FMW, p. 173.
126FMW, p. 219.
127FMW, p. 207.
of strength: it is yielding to the Other, knowing and being known.\textsuperscript{128}

One may question where the person of Christ fits into this community of mutually liberating persons. Macmurray does not appear to affirm the completed work of Christ to be the source of freedom. There is no freedom "in Christ" that enables us, despite our own incapacity, to be friends. Christ is the first friend and the revealer of our personal nature, but now we must act with others to fulfill our freedom.

Freedom is something we seek and it requires successful activity for fulfillment.\textsuperscript{129} Macmurray affirms that humans are intended to be free from bondage and rules, liberated to live in community—this is the hallmark of Christian teaching,\textsuperscript{130} but communion with Christ is absent as the means to freedom. According to Macmurray, Christ is liberator by being the first friend rather than being the one whose presence as Emmanuel brings us into fellowship with the free, triune God.

5.3.2 Forms of Freedom

Macmurray believed that freedom's three forms correspond to the three levels of reality in the world: the material, the organic, and the personal. Freedom in relation to the material world is economic freedom. Social freedom is that which is concerned with organic interrelations. As we relate to the Other with real thought and emotion in a fully personal manner, we have spiritual freedom.\textsuperscript{131} As humans we are material and animal and, hence, also experience the lower forms of freedom. Full personal freedom, however, is uniquely spiritual.\textsuperscript{132}

Freedom is achieved when a person or thing acts as an expression of its nature. Different things have quite different natures and, thus, different kinds of freedom. Economic or material freedom is the freedom of material bodies which behave mechanically, uniformly. We describe their movements as following laws, always repeating the same pattern of movement in the same circumstances. The object is free by obedience to the fixed laws of nature.\textsuperscript{133}

In the human arena, we may attempt to organize freedom by means of law. Often, law is proposed as a means to freedom.\textsuperscript{134} While laws may be adequate to describe the way our bodies follow gravity and other material laws, it is not

\textsuperscript{128} CF, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{129} RE, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{130} CH, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{131} FMW, pp. 100–01.
\textsuperscript{132} FMW, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{133} FMW, pp. 176–77.
\textsuperscript{134} FMW, p. 187.
appropriate to describe our nature as persons. As persons, we must be responsible for ourselves—free to decide what we will do in mutual interchange with others. If freedom is to be construed as mere obedience to law, we foist responsibility on someone else whereby we have no need to be real in relation to the Other, only to be conformed mindlessly to the law. The good person in such a society could be a robot. In such relations, there is no personal interchange, only the indirect relations of buying and selling, cooperating to meet material needs in an economic relation. Each person's value derives from the function performed (teacher, grocer, mail person, etc) and as long as uniformly performed functions continue, economic freedom exists.

Although we must admit that the impersonal element in human relations is necessary, it is not complete of itself, because it neglects our being as persons. If we are forced to operate at this level, we are enslaved. "It is not the nature of human beings to act in conformity to law ... Mechanical, economic morality mistakenly conceives of persons as mere bodies and human acts as conformity to law. Power may be achieved in this system through the accumulation of money, which is an expression of material freedom, but this cannot bring real freedom, because friendship cannot be bought.

Social freedom considers humans in their nature as living things, part of the organic world which ranges from tiny organisms to complex mammals. We divide this field of life roughly into plant and animal, but all have the capacity for free variation. Organisms do not act the same in all circumstances, they grow and adapt in definite directions which reflect the nature of the organism. There is a "harmonious interchange and interplay between the living thing and its environment." Organisms experience freedom as they adapt and respond, realizing their own nature in fitting themselves to their environment. This extends beyond the individual creature, through the capacity to reproduce and bring about variation in subsequent generations. The ability to develop, becoming more complex over time, allows the organism the freedom to fulfill its purpose as a living thing, progressing spontaneously as a part of the whole natural world.

135 FMW, pp. 188–89.
136 PR, p. 186.
137 FMW, p. 191.
138 FMW, p. 194.
139 FMW, p. 203.
140 FMW, p. 178.
141 FMW, p. 179.
142 FMW, pp. 178–79.
143 FMW, p. 180.
Humans are organic in nature, but that is not the limit of our nature. We are more than organisms that need to adapt to our environment.\textsuperscript{144} We admire the person who adapts to each situation and achieves some measure of success in the sphere of that person’s influence,\textsuperscript{145} but status (social power), like money (economic power), cannot bring intimate personal relations.

If we conceive ourselves merely as organisms, we attempt to integrate ourselves with the purposes of life in society and suppress our own desires for the common good. We adopt our parents’ adaptations to society and pursue opportunities for further self-development by meeting society’s needs. Success depends on whether we act for the common good, though we may (secondarily) fulfill our own. The good person serves country, community, and family in social service. Through self-devotion, we hope to bring about a better society as a progression of organized, impersonal relations. Each person is thought to be free because the public structure provides for, and protects, the private life of individual existence. Persons are not valued for themselves, but for their contribution to society. Everyone is treated as a means to an end.\textsuperscript{146} Each person must subordinate personhood to the needs of the organization, whether the place of employment or in the government, and hope for a better world through human engineering.

Ultimately, Macmurray says, we are “worshipping social organization.”\textsuperscript{147} We lose our freedom by becoming part of the social machine. Properly operative, the organizations of society should serve to fulfill personal relations,\textsuperscript{148} but this happens only when community is valued over social progress, and when individualism is rejected in preference for the free relations of persons.\textsuperscript{149} Freedom can never be institutionalized; it must be entered into through mutual personal relations.\textsuperscript{150}

Spiritual freedom is proper freedom, reflecting the nature of persons.\textsuperscript{151} Personal freedom is based in reality and is embraced with “spontaneous objectivity.”\textsuperscript{152} It is objective in that we apprehend and enjoy that which is not ourselves, entering into communion with other beings. It is spontaneous in that it is not obedience to a law or obligation. It is an intention (motivated by love) to know the other for the sake of friendship. This does not imply that the other determines the agenda.

\textsuperscript{144} FMW, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{145} FMW, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{146} FMW, p. 199.
\textsuperscript{147} FMW, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{148} FMW, p. 201.
\textsuperscript{149} See discussion in ‘FPN,’ pp. 186–92.
\textsuperscript{150} FMW, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{151} FMW, p. 181.
\textsuperscript{152} FMW, p. 182.
for the relation or that there is any loss of self in the concern for the other. "One of the surest signs of a man's freedom is his ability to be alone, to stand alone, to be different from other people—think differently and feel differently and behave differently."\footnote{FMW, p. 206.} To do otherwise is to live in conformity to another's intention. If it is truly a friendship, it will be a mutual relation. It cannot merely be friendliness toward another, it must be communion based on trust if the freedom is to be real and unconstrained.\footnote{FMW, p. 207.}

To be fully human is to be spiritually free. We are created by God with the capacity for communion, and in the exercise of this intimate interrelation, we are fulfilled in freedom. "To be a good human being is to realize true human nature in oneself; that is to say, to be really human in one's way of living. But that is the same thing as being free."\footnote{FMW, p. 180.} One cannot conceive freedom in Macmurray's thought without understanding what it means to be a person: they are correlative concepts. There are no rules to achieve full freedom, for rules are restrictions.\footnote{RE, p. 111.} There is no technique—economic, social, or political—for gaining freedom. Only in the proper function of religion can freedom be realized.\footnote{'FPN', p. 193.} We participate with God as the personal Other who created us for freedom, and by whose presence our freedom is maintained in building the kingdom of God. Unfortunately, Macmurray focuses more on the human capacity to create this freedom than God and ultimately puts the onus on the human to bring freedom to fruition.
6

Freedom in the Thought of John Zizioulas

In this chapter, I discuss the means whereby the church, especially through the Eucharist, enables persons to transcend history so as to fulfill personhood and experience freedom.

John Zizioulas believes freedom is a God-given gift by means of which a person is lifted out of the fallen, created order to partake of the uncreated, divine life. He identifies personal being as being in communion and freedom as a relational, rather than an intellectual, reality.¹

6.1 The Basis of Freedom

According to Zizioulas, God, who offers humans the choice of sharing in divine life through communion with Godself, fulfills human beings and, thus, facilitates freedom. The Spirit brings this freedom through participation in the life of the ecclesial community.

6.1.1 The Freedom of God

Zizioulas believes that discussion of freedom must begin with God as its context and affirms that the Cappadocian formulation of freedom—namely, that it is a personal way of being—is the most proper understanding. As such, freedom is the ability to cause and is used primarily of God the Father, who is not forced to act in

¹BCCI p. 22.
any way, but chooses to act based on personal initiative. God is free, as a person, to cause.

Absolute freedom is possible only with God; specifically, in the eternal state. Freedom for humans (and all creation) is possible only in the transcendence of the boundaries of the created order. Thus, human freedom is contingent upon being lifted out of history into the free being of God. God’s absolute freedom is evident in the creation of the world, where material boundaries limit one to the parameters that the material realm dictates, but God is bound by no such necessity. God’s absolute freedom is known in God’s ability to create something from nothing. All other freedom is relative to and dependent on the prior act of God, who provides the boundaries of existence.

God’s freedom is part of an eternal existence in which humanity is brought to share; thus, the truth (fulfilled state of communion) is a way of being in freedom. Zizioulas uses truth interchangeably with communion—that life in the eschaton: eternal being. In order that the church experience this freedom, it must be brought to share in this eschatological reality through the Eucharist. Such communion is not a “product of social experience” based on the relations between persons in the local church community. Rather, it is “a sacramental taste in the life of God.”

Zizioulas’ understanding of communion, upon which freedom is based, is eschatological rather than part of this world. Persons are brought to share in it through the Word and sacrament of the church and so truth (being in communion) becomes freedom when the divisions of the natural world are overcome and all of creation shares in the Christ-event. In communion, distinctions—which lead to fragmentation—disintegrate and the people of God are gathered, affirmed in Christ. Only in this communion is humanity free.

Because the Spirit is the One who brings us into communion, it is also the Spirit who establishes human freedom. The Spirit opens up the historical dimension to impart the eternal being of God to humanity. Thus, the freedom of God is offered

---

2 'T2EC,' p. 37. See also footnote 21.
3 'PGC3,' p. 35.
4 'PGC3,' p. 31. See also John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation (Part 2),” Soverhe 40 (1990): 35. Hereafter ‘PGC2.’
5 'PGC3,' p. 28.
6 'PDC,' p. 153.
7 'PDC,' p. 153.
8 'PDC,' p. 153.
9 'BAC,' p. 121.
10 'BAC,' p. 122.
11 'BAC,' p. 122.
to humans as the foretaste of eschatological freedom in the Eucharist. Gunton echoes this concept, “The Spirit is the Father’s liberating otherness, realizing in our present the life of the age to come.”

6.1.2 Theosis

Human persons, brought to share in the freedom of God, undergo a transformation in the spiritual nature. Participation in the divine life is called *theosis* and does not refer to divinization; rather, it is an elevation which causes humanity to meet God and thereby be changed. Through this act of participation (initiated and accomplished by God), one shares in the personal existence of God and experiences salvation.

According to Zizioulas, the creation, “if it is self-centered and autonomous,” cannot survive alone, but is destined for destruction. Through *theosis* the created order is brought to communion with the uncreated and is granted salvation by the life-giving Spirit. Thus, salvation is realized through transcendence of biological existence. “Life and communion coincide only in the realm of the uncreated, since in creation death overcomes communion.” Through *theosis* humans are brought to share in communion with God and receive their freedom. Thus, as the true ontology of personhood lies outside of historical existence, so do the conditions of freedom. *Theosis*, then, is the release from history to participate in the immanent life of the Trinity.

6.1.3 Freedom Through the Church

According to Zizioulas’ paradigm, the hope of freedom for humanity (and all creation) is in the church, the earthly expression of the heavenly reality. As such, it is not a symbol of the eternal, but rather is a portal. Through baptism, one is born again into a new communion, a new family, and integrates into the body of Christ, the earthly body of the eternal Son. Thus, baptism is a birth to freedom.

Re-constituted as an ecclesial being, a person transcends biological *hypostasis* and leaves behind death. However, re-hypostasis is not a completed event;
it is maintained through an ongoing participation in the Eucharist as the Spirit repeatedly constitutes the church in communion. As the Spirit lifts the church in the Eucharist event to taste the eschatological life, the Spirit grants freedom to the communicants who make up the ecclesial community.

Although Zizioulas (properly) grounds freedom in the being of God, he appears to have limited the freedom of God to action in the sphere of the church. If this is so, human freedom is dependent on the church, not specifically on God. In his emphasis of the eschatological nature and fulfillment of freedom, he neglects the historical economy of God in effecting human freedom. The Eucharist becomes an event that points one to future realities and another kind of existence and has little reference to this world. However, it is imperative that we not dismiss the historical economy because it has direct implications for human freedom here and now. Jesus came to set prisoners free, bind up the brokenhearted, and forgive the guilt-ridden (Luke 4:19-21). He did not emphasize eschatological realities exclusively. His healing presence offered life in the temporal here and now as well as in the eschaton.

6.2 Misunderstandings of Freedom

Most human attempts to define freedom are erroneous because of their anthropocentric premises. Traditionally, the world is divided into two groups: 1) humanity and 2) all that which challenges free human choice. Historically, such formulations included whatever seemed to challenge personal freedom at the time—God, the wilderness, the sea, animals, or other humans.

Greek ontology, which perceived history as a closed circle, depicted humanity’s existence as a struggle in a closed system in which conformity to the unified system was the only means of maintaining existence. The Greek theater, particularly the tragedy, reflected the conflicts of the greater stage of life. Human freedom was conceived as restricted by an oppressive world. However, escape from the determined structure of the world could be effected by assuming a mask on the stage (of the world) and assuming a new (free) identity. In this context, human tragedy was unique with respect to freedom: human beings alone were

---

19 BAC, p. 70.
20 BAC, pp. 31-32. The universe was a necessary, rational, and moral structure which oppressed humanity. Humanity struggled with the gods and fate, but suffered, always bearing the consequences of opposing the set order.
21 BAC, pp. 32–33.
driven toward unattainable freedom. The tragic nature of humanity constantly pressed persons to seek new masks which would achieve transcendence from the waning freedom of old masks.

Historically, the church has not liberated humanity because it has portrayed God as One who imposes divine will onto humanity. Assuming its knowledge of divine will, it forced persons to choose between submission to God (actually, to the church institution) or atheism. Ironically, because of this oppressive use of “knowledge”—which forced individuals to choose between their individual free will and submission to the church—it has empowered atheism and fostered a sense of individualism.

It is no wonder that so many today search for a personal identity so as to escape the loneliness of individualism. Seeking community which is not oppressive, persons hope for a sense of belonging by identifying with ancestors, fellow-enthusiasts, and fellow-sufferers. In a society of desperately lonely, unfulfilled individuals, who are restrained by laws intended to facilitate harmony, humans create their own personal hell by demanding their free will (and, consequently, isolation) and ignoring true community. Sadly, humanity has chosen its own negation rather than enjoying true freedom with God.

6.3 Truth and Freedom

Zizioulas proposes that only by living with a full knowledge of the truth can humans be free. By such, he does not imply an intellectual knowledge; rather, it is an encounter with the eternal, communing God. To know the truth is to enter into the ontological being of communion with God and it is by being a part of Christ’s body, lifted up into eternity by the Spirit, that persons are transformed in their experience of the Father’s love.

His formulation of freedom stresses the necessity of escape from the biological existence because as part of creation, we are proceeding toward death. However, as the Creator ek-statically renews us, we transcend the boundaries of creation and share divine life and, therefore, are enabled to experience freedom, the
completion of being made in the *imago Dei*. In this paradigm, the *imago Dei* is not part of the created order (a human capacity), it refers to a quality of God: self-transcendence. Thus, because humanity is created in the *imago Dei*, it receives,\(^{28}\) rather than initiates, freedom. According to Zizioulas, freedom is brought about by the Spirit, who creates community, liberates people from individualism, and draws them to freedom.\(^{29}\) The Spirit leads the church to the Truth, Christ, whose being is constituted by the life and communion of his body. In this communion persons have freedom. As such, it is not a fulfillment of morality; it is the realization of ontological communion.\(^{30}\) Zizioulas clearly distinguishes between morality and ontological communion, "This is not moral but ontological freedom, deriving from the identification of being and truth with communion."\(^{31}\) Unlike God, humanity exists with all the constraints of creation\(^{32}\) and its freedom is relative. God, acting in absolute freedom, has created the contingent world, but this world was never intended to achieve autocratic fulfillment. Fulfillment is in the realm of God and it is only in communion with God that humanity is the vehicle whereby God embraces creation in communion and establishes its freedom.

### 6.4 Personal Freedom

According to Zizioulas, the events of history bear the seal of freedom that is inherent in personhood. It is difficult to resolve the discrepancy between this proposal and that of the previous section, in which he asserts that freedom is not inherent in persons and most assuredly can be realized only in God. Here, he depicts freedom as an inherent trait in humans which can be observed through the self-transcendence of persons in their acts of creating history.\(^{33}\)

In an attempt to resolve the problem, it appears that once personhood is established as the ultimate ontological category, it follows that the nature of being is

---

\(^{28}\) *PGC3,* p. 32.

\(^{29}\) *PDC,* p. 152.

\(^{30}\) *BAC,* p. 121, footnote 126.

\(^{31}\) *BAC,* p. 122, footnote 126.

\(^{32}\) *PGC3,* p. 32.

\(^{33}\) *HCII,* p. 418.
linked with freedom, because the being of God is caused by a free person. The personal God acts in freedom and when humanity is given personhood, it also receives the dimension of freedom. Whereas God creates without any constraints, humanity is limited by God's prior creation; hence, human freedom is relative. Because true freedom is fulfilled as a gifting of God, capabilities cannot be considered as freedom. Indeed, it is incapacity which motivates persons to move toward God. Being strong, we seek independence—and become weak. Being weak, we seek that which will give us strength. Thus, our capacity for freedom is found in our inherent incapacity.

So it is that Zizioulas can assert that nothing in our nature enables freedom; it is tied up with our mode of being as persons. As personhood is constituted in ek-stasis, so also is freedom. Freedom is established in transcendence of the self and communion with God and humanity is created to long for this communion. Therefore, any act that is considered free must be so because it is a move to communion. In sum, the only true exercise of freedom is an act of love.

Having established freedom as fulfilled personhood which is grounded in love, Zizioulas can affirm that God exists as a person because of the love which constitutes God's being. Love, then, is a way of being in freedom, a 'transcending relatedness with the other.' Again, Zizioulas proposes that freedom has its true ontology in eternity.

Because his formulations of freedom emphasize its complete dependency on God, the church, and the Eucharist, there is sufficient reason to raise the question as to whether anyone can experience any form of freedom outside of the church. It is true that all human freedom is relative; however, surely we must insist that it is relative not only to God, but is affected by our relations to one another as well. It is unfortunate that Zizioulas has not engaged in the dialogue of how human relations...
affect freedom because his noticeable silence on the subject conveys the impression that freedom is relevant only in the God-human relation and not in human-human relations.

Perhaps if Zizioulas consistently adhered to his premise that being is communion, he might have expanded the notion logically to include equality and mutuality in personhood. Had he done so, he would have offered a coherent theology that would have tendered valuable service to the church community. Instead, by bringing his Orthodox presuppositions of hierarchical personhood into his formulation of trinitarian existence, he has dissected the Trinity and prioritized the Father. In so doing, he has defined freedom as the choice of one (the Father) rather than the shared being of three in communion. Consequently, he has proposed two models of the Trinity: (hierarchical and communal) with two forms of freedom (cause and mutual love).

Although he has been somewhat internally inconsistent, here he has consistently applied his presuppositions to a number of related issues. Unfortunately, his Orthodox presuppositions have no small impact. Not only have they determined his formulations of trinitarian personhood and of freedom, but they have served as the basis for his hierarchical church model. Structured hierarchically, its relations follow suit and reflect a functionally based hierarchy rather than personal being as mutual communion. Hence, his premise which appeared so promising at the start, has not resulted in freedom. Furthermore, he has proposed that the true ontology of personhood is only an eschatological reality—and with it our freedom—his theological anthropology has little practical application for the church in its biological existence. The only sense in which one can be free, in Zizioulas’ model, is in anticipation: a presence of longing for that which is absent.
In this chapter, I demonstrate that Barth locates the fulfillment of human freedom in Christ: humans are free because of God’s prior activity. Therefore, freedom, which is in Christ, has implications for a life of response.

Freedom, according to Barth, is dynamic: it is based in that one relationship wherein one’s personhood actually is fulfilled. Freedom is not a general concept for Barth: he understands freedom with reference to God, whose existence with and love for humans are both acts of freedom. God’s freedom is revealed to humanity in the election of Jesus Christ, who, on behalf of the world, overcomes alienation as the one true, free person by virtue of his joyful obedience to the Father. The Holy Spirit, bringing humanity to share in this response, gifts humans with a dependent freedom and creates a community which responsibly serves the Father within the sphere of God’s prior free action. Human freedom, then, is realized in acts of obedient response. Freedom is the enjoyment of dynamic, responsive relationships rather than a static state of fulfillment in isolation. Such an understanding of freedom radically departs from conceptions which establish human freedom in opposition to God.

### 7.1 Trinitarian Freedom

God is dependent on no prior necessity, condition, or limitation: God’s being is in freedom, but God chooses to act in sovereign grace toward humanity in order that we may participate in God’s free history. God is *actus purus*: a being who exists
freely in a specific act:¹ firstly, a se (for Godself), but also pro nobis (for us) and, finally, pro me (for me).² In the revelation of Jesus as Lord, God is sovereign and free not only in Godself, but in all subsequent actions toward humanity. More than mere transcendence (existence unconstrained by the world), freedom is unveiled precisely in God’s being with us, positively demonstrating unconditional, self-grounded love.³ God alone is originally, uniquely, free; all other beings depend upon the prior free act of God, who is the necessary constituent for humanity’s very being.⁴

The Trinity’s existence is not merely unlimited possibility or abstract sovereignty. God, free in word and act, has willed and accomplished human freedom in encounter and communion. Such relational freedom in the Godhead has been, and continues to be, expressed in embracing grace.⁵ Human knowledge of this freedom occurs as God freely encounters and transforms us. Therefore, God is known as the One who is free for humanity, and subsequent discussions can address only the forms freedom takes. God’s history, then, is a free history which creates the possibility of human freedom—the essence of the Gospel,⁶ and alternate understandings of freedom are mere speculation.

God is the only autonomously free personal being. Thus, when we speak of God’s freedom, we refer to freedom in its only true ontic reality. When God makes decisions and acts in truth, righteousness, holiness, and mercy, these are necessary distinctions of the original, personal freedom of God. When God is revealed as Lord, the term refers to the free manifold expressions of God’s freedom.⁷ Declaring Jesus as Lord, then, is to affirm that he is the One who, manifesting God’s freedom, diversely acts for humanity in personal, God-revealing autonomy.

Jesus reveals God as a personal being who is free to exist in self-relation, but has chosen also to exist for humanity. God is originally a being-in-freedom (synonymous with “God is the Lord”), who alone is self-grounded, self-determined, self-moved, unlimited, unrestricted, and unconditioned from without. Such freedom is manifested in—though not limited by—the fact that God is the free Creator,

¹Timothy Bradshaw, “Karl Barth on the Trinity: A Family Resemblance,” SJT 39 (1986): 160. But see CD 2.1, p. 264, “Actus purus is not sufficient as a description of God. To it there must be added at least “et singularis.” It is the specific, original act, not a general action.
²HOG, p. 74.
³CD 2.1, pp. 440–41.
⁴CD 3.2, p. 194.
⁵HOG, pp. 67–68.
⁶HOG, p. 70.
⁷CD 1.1, p. 307.
Reconciler, and Redeemer of the world. The emphasis of such freedom is on God's act of self-disclosure rather than on prior existence and subsequently free acts. God exists in the eternal decision to be in self-relation (correspondence); the Father relates to the Son (humanity of God) so that God is reiterated in human history. The eternal decision to elect the Son establishes a relationship with humanity, so that the internal life of free love is expressed externally in self-revelation. God, this particular being in double-sided encounter, is self-determined in Christ to be the elect One who shapes God (electing God) and humanity (elected human). Hence, God's freedom is the completed decision of this relationship and is not a state of unlimited possibilities and/or choices. "In God all potentiality is included in His actuality and therefore all freedom in His decision. Decision means choice, exercised freedom." God fulfills what is willed, and, therefore, God's freedom is known in God's action—not as general autonomy, but as specific theonomy—uniquely understood through God's action in Christ.

Such freedom does not imply God's disregard of the human; rather, God's freedom disallows human freedom to compete with or limit God. God's determination that the creature be included in the eternal will as a partner within the covenant established by God, does not negate human freedom, but establishes it. Because God freely pardons, removes shame, encounters humanity in grace and love, and overcomes death, humans are summoned to a truly free life of joyful, grateful response. Grace precedes the law of liberty; election enables free response and God's will is the condition of human freedom—not its limitation. "How could it be freedom of the divine mercy bestowed on man, if it suppressed and dissolved human freedom? It is the grace of revelation that God exercises and maintains his freedom to free man." God's love for the creature is the motive which plans and

---

8CD 2.1, p. 301.
10Jungel, God's Being is in Becoming, pp. 68–69.
11Thus, all discussion which begins with the question, "If God is free, then why...?" addresses possibilities, rather than actualities. God has revealed Godself in freedom and has chosen to restrain evil by a choice to be for humanity in Christ (including a "No" against sin) and by not granting ontological reality to evil. The negative is confronted only in the positive.
12CD 1.1, p. 157.
13DIO, p. 47.
16CD 2.2, p. 30.
17CD 2.1, p. 560.
18CD, 1.2, p. 365.
orders the relationship, establishing freedom on the One who can accomplish it. 19 By creating, God granted autonomous human existence (established and main­tained by God) and decided to be for humanity, determining—not compelling—us to be God’s children. 20 Thus, we are called to be free in the obedient, loving re­response which corresponds to God’s own being. 21 Freedom in obedience is revealed in Jesus, the obedient Son.

7.2 Jesus, the Free Person Who Gives Freedom

God does not provide humanity with unlimited possibilities of choice, but graces humanity with an actual freedom in a specific form. Trinitarian freedom enters into space and time as the reality of Father, Son, and Spirit, revealed in the life of the Son. God, incarnated as a human person, came to set humans free through a personal relationship, and the activity of the incarnation is appropriate to establish human freedom exactly in that it comes only through a personal relation of humanity with God. Christ is the One through whom God encounters humanity and in whom humanity responds to the Father: he is God’s freedom for humanity and humanity’s freedom for God.

Fallen humanity is enslaved in sin, but the eternal God has chosen on behalf of humanity to elect Jesus Christ for the reconciliation of this alienated relationship. God, whose being is in free act, has chosen to extricate humanity from its self-destruction by taking on human lowliness, thereby lifting up humanity so as to attain this intended freedom. 22 Thus, the election of Christ is the heart of the gospel, the actuality of God’s encounter and the reconciling act which liberates humanity to be a covenant partner. 23 God, then, is the One who sets captives free by returning them to the One who unconditionally loves and accepts them. In Christ, we see God, who elects freely 24 to be for and with humanity, by being human and doing for humanity what it cannot.

In Christ, humanity is freed through God’s eternal decision to extend grace, 25 therefore, speculation about partial selection (electing some humans and rejecting

19 CD 3.3, p. 188.
21 Thompson, Christ in Perspective, p. 102.
22 CD 2.2, p. 188.
23 CD 2.2, pp. 13–14.
25 CD 2.2, pp. 94–95.
others) is obsolete by virtue of the fact that the one free human chosen by God is Jesus Christ. God frees humanity only by being present and active in Christ, through whom humanity is pardoned and liberated once for all and therefore God’s freedom for humanity is the elected, free grace of God. To refer to such freedom is to refer to Christ as Lord, the sphere of human freedom.

We have been forgiven because of him; we are encountered by God through him; and we continue to hear the command of God in his embrace. “For what man knows and lives as his freedom, he lives in the freedom which is given him and created for him by the fact that Christ intercedes for him in the presence of God.” Thus, humanity’s freedom is enclosed wholly in God’s freedom, granted in Christ: it is the freedom of being favored by God and lovingly fulfilled in Christ. Responding to this personal determination, we experience freedom.

Jesus is the one free human because he alone exists in the communion with the Father which allows him to hear the Father’s command and to respond obediently. He is the One who lives in full correspondence to the Father on behalf of humanity and fulfills the Father’s will. In his complete obedience comes his freedom and ours; thus, he is the prototype of all human freedom and the One in whom all others find freedom. The divine trinitarian freedom to love finds reciprocal response in the divine human who invites humanity to share the freedom in which he exists as communion with God.

This freedom of communion expands in the sphere of personal relations. We would not be persons (much less free persons) had not God preceded us in Christ, but the Spirit of adoption brings us into correspondence with God through Christ and thereby establishes personhood and freedom. Therefore, freedom belongs properly to Christ, but is intended to be effective for all and is a shared freedom, a freedom for humanity. We are called and elected to a specific freedom—that in Christ. To desire something else from him or something apart from him is to reject the pardon and call to communion offered in Christ.

---

26CD 2.2, p. 177.
27CD 4.1, pp. 568–608. Robert T. Osborn, *Freedom in Modern Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), p. 138, has preferred to translate Freispruch as pardon. These appear to be two sides of one coin: one refers to the history of sin that is pardoned, the other looks to the future for which humans are liberated.
29DJO, p. 91.
30HOG, pp. 45–46.
Christ’s reconciliation that human freedom comes. He freely gave up his life in order to rise a victorious head of a body who need not fear death. Instead, we can hope in him because he has fulfilled personhood, conquered death, and enabled freedom on behalf of humanity.\footnote{CD 4.2, pp. 467–68.}

In Christ’s obedience, our liberation has been accomplished. He lives as the judge, judged in our place, and is in all ways for us;\footnote{Thompson, Christ in Perspective, p. 62. “That he is the Judge who has removed us from the judgment seat and is in this way pro nobis is, according to Barth, the first main theme (though not the only one) of the first part of the gospel narratives.”} therefore, by acknowledging that Jesus lives, we affirm that he is for us, overcomes death and alienation on our behalf, and personally brings us into the embrace of the Father. Through the gift of Christ’s justification, sanctification, faith, and love, our freedom is determined to be actual.\footnote{CD 4.3.ii, pp. 662–63.}

Our liberation in Jesus overcomes our bondage to sin and brings us to a new kind of existence: we are persons drawn from solitude to fellowship, delivered from self-destructive possibilities to the one redeeming necessity, elevated from thinghood to personhood, released from self-justification to freely-granted salvation, liberated from indecision to obedient response, and extricated from the compulsion of anxiety to experience the communion of prayer.\footnote{CD 4.3.ii, pp. 664–73.} Jesus is faithful to the Father and simultaneously is faithful toward humanity (despite the unfaithfulness of humanity). Jesus gives us his faithful history so that his liberation for us might be followed by our transformation.\footnote{CD 4.4, p. 21.} Freedom is not taken: it is given. We do not possess it: it is maintained by Christ, who continues to be for us.\footnote{CD 2.1, pp. 258–59.}

Freedom, then, is a result of Christ being with us: it is attained through the divine, ongoing encounter of the Word who accompanies us. God fulfills the covenant in order to be a consistently faithful partner on behalf of the other (who can only live within an already-created relationship). God is with us in covenant faithfulness by encountering us actually and personally\footnote{CD 4.1, p. 40.} in Jesus (who is specifically with us as Lord). His lordship necessarily qualifies our freedom\footnote{CD 4.3.i, p. 337.} and his authority to be for us—through being with us—creates the context of a personal relationship which daily recreates human freedom. “Lordship means freedom.”\footnote{CD 1.1, p. 306.}
Christ's permanent role of revealing God is as an encountering person who nullifies human speculation about God. To know the lordship of Christ is to hear the Word of affirmation who quickens us simply to be transformed by living in his grace. Freedom is knowing this Lord whose liberating presence compassionately releases us from our fear so that we may believe in him. The response of faith (joyful obedience) to this Lord allows us to become that person we were created to be. Even this response is not wholly ours: he frees us to respond. He becomes like disobedient humans in order to be the obedient One; he comes to be in our place in order that we might share his place of communion with the Father. Becoming our servant in order to be our Lord, he frees us from the slavery of our self-made, alienating lordship.

Thus, Jesus also fulfills human freedom as freedom from those things which destroy freedom. He reorients us from the alienating self-satisfaction which demands "freedom of choice" and draws us into true freedom. Pardoning our sins, he encloses us in himself so that we might turn to him and be maintained in freedom. He frees us from arrogant disobedience, sinful pasts, and the false freedom of pride. "Freedom" sought outside of Christ is in fact slavery because its source is in individualism and isolation, not in relationship. Without a Thou, we experience the rupture of an I who has no correspondence and are imprisoned by the isolation of fear and pride, insecurity and introspection. Relationship, however, releases us to the truly freeing experience of being loved by another, to the correspondence of an I-Thou existence. Freedom results from the particular, prior, I-Thou relationship found in Christ and consequently from the corresponding I-Thou relationship persons have with one another.

Jesus, the freedom of God for humanity, lives as the one free human for God and brings humanity freedom by being for and with it, saving it from self-destruction. His freedom is multi-faceted and dynamic, beyond static or abstract definition. True freedom is realized concretely in Christ.

---

41 CD 1.1, p. 324.
42 Which all too often creates an image after its own anxiety: a condemning, judging, vengeful deity who is indifferent to pain and need.
43 CD 1.1, p. 457.
44 CD 4.1, p. 744.
45 CD 4.2, p. 311.
46 CD 4.2, p. 531.
47 CD 4.1, p. 554.
48 This is in exception to the position of Hendry, "The Freedom of God," pp. 233–35, where he proposes five meanings of freedom which are to be distinguished from each other, but none of these are contradictory with the others. I suggest that this is an inadequate list to describe the
7.3 The Holy Spirit of Freedom

Christ is the objective revelation of God whose encounter brings freedom and the Holy Spirit accomplishes the subjective experience of this liberating revelation by facilitating our self-surrender. The Spirit, the bond of peace by whom Christ has united us to himself, enables us to experience the free love of the Father and Son. It is by the Spirit that Christ comes as our liberator and, therefore, the Spirit is necessary for human freedom.

Only where the Spirit of the Lord is can freedom exist. Barth was no more Christocentric than the Bible reveals the Spirit to be. Christ leads us into freedom and the Spirit assists us in knowing and responding to God's revelation, thereby actualizing our freedom on a daily basis. The Spirit makes us recipients of the promised freedom through enabling us to hear—and be transformed by—the Word of God. The Spirit frees us by encountering and adopting us as the children of God. Obedience, then, is a Spirit-granted response to God's freeing love and constitutes human freedom.

The Spirit, in freedom, creates the unique freeing relation between God and humanity that gives life to the creature and discloses God. The Holy Spirit, who gives humans the capacity they do not have in themselves to hear the revelation of God, is the link between Christ and humanity. Through the Spirit, God is freely with us and we are gladly with God: this is freedom.

The Spirit reorients us away from ourselves and toward Christ and facilitates a transforming relationship with Jesus, turning self-centered chaos into a Christ-centered cosmos. Because chaos is not freedom, the Spirit unmasks our lack of freedom in various ways in which God personally acts in freedom. Noticeably missing is freedom defined as being-with-another, the basic form of Barth's understanding of freedom. See Robert J. Palma, Karl Barth's Theology of Culture: The Freedom of Culture for the Praise of God (Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1983), p. 33. Palma notes the multiplex character of God's freedom and, although he does not disagree with Hendry, he notes that the multiplexity is due to the richness of God's freedom. Admittedly, this is an improvement on Hendry, but I propose that it is better to attribute the multiplexity to the personal nature of God in Christ, similar to the manner in which Barth did not want to describe the triumph of grace per se, but of Jesus Christ. Freedom must be conceived as part of the being of God and, hence, is as complex and as simple as the personhood of God.

---

49 CD 1.2, p. 239.
50 CD 4.3.1, p. 353.
51 CD 1.1, p. 450.
52 ET, p. 47.
54 Rosato, The Spirit as Lord, p. 94.
of freedom so as to show us true freedom, which is God’s and is shared with humanity. God, unconditioned and unconstrained, invites us to share in this freedom and facilitates the responsive freedom of humanity so that this sharing occurs. “If God is free for man in Jesus Christ, man is free for God in the Holy Spirit.” All human freedom, then, depends upon the activity of God bringing humans to share in what belongs to God.

Within this context, the Spirit draws the children of God into the freedom of obedience, which is lived in faith and frees us to hear the Word which addresses us. Choosing that which corresponds to the particular Word (Christ), we experience real freedom. In the Spirit, we are joined to the Lord and belong to him, free because we do not belong to ourselves, but to this One who loves us. The Spirit enables us to hear and, hence, to answer freely. In hearing, we are healed by the doctor veritatis to live in correspondence with the truth (Christ) and with the Christian community.

The Spirit, then, grants us the freedom to be who we really are in Christ in an analogous existence to the life of the obedient Son. The Spirit nourishes the correlation of children and God, which is freedom, and inspires free worship and praise. “Gratitude, thankfulness, means emancipated obedience.” In gratitude, the community exists united by the Spirit and oriented in obedience to the loving God—all life that seeks to be Christian (and therefore free) must correspond with God—a correspondence which can be facilitated only by the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Even theology, then, cannot be free unless the Holy Spirit guides its endeavors as a humble, critical, and happy science. Pneumatology cannot be separate from Christology. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17) because the Lord is there.

56 CD 1.2, pp. 204–05.
57 Rosato, The Spirit as Lord, p. 70.
58 CD 2.2, p. 605.
59 CD 3.2, p. 306.
60 CD 4.2, p. 126.
61 CD 4.2, pp. 374–75.
62 CD 1.2, p. 199.
63 HOG, p. 83.
64 ET, p. 49.
7.4 The Church: the Community of Freedom

The Holy Spirit, the awakening power of the Word, creates the historical church community as the body which has been freed by its Lord. Because Jesus has freed it, the community must hear about its liberation so it can experience freedom by responsively participating in worship, thankfulness, and love. The Spirit gathers, builds, and enables the community to fulfill the work of the Word and be free.65 The Word cannot bring freedom without the Spirit; reciprocally, the Spirit cannot bring freedom without the Word.66 Freedom is an acquired sphere of intimacy67 in which the good God has intervened in the midst of alienation and allowed the freedom of the tender address “Father.” It exists in the sphere of the community which has Christ as its head because persons can be free only where the Word speaks and they may answer.68 Hence, the church has no absolute authority or freedom in or of itself: its authority is that of derived, communing existence in Christ by the Spirit.69

Its canon (scripture) is not a self-contained guide to freedom, but is a witness to the authoritative presence of Christ who actually addresses his church through it and, in the personal encounter, creates freedom.

Scripture provides the basis and limits of the freedom whereby the freeing encounter can occur and its members be liberated.70 It is the basis because it is the only true witness, and it challenges all other forms of authority so that Christ may be the Lord of his church, bringing real freedom. Proper interpretation of the Bible is thus imperative. It enables and maintains living conversation between Christ and his body and interpretation must occur in the context of humble submission to Christ—first listening and then speaking. We must allow the Spirit to confront all human presuppositions and acknowledge the fact that it is God’s Word, but a human interpretation. Authority, in this context, is derived, heteronomous, lived under and from God. Human autonomy operates properly only under this heteronomy of the church,71 which in worship, confession, and proclamation functions as the

65 CD 4.1, pp. 151–53. For the service of the community, the Spirit directs individuals: (1) awakening them to faith, (2) quickening them in love, and (3) enlightening them in hope.
66 CD 1.2, pp. 669–73.
70 CD 1.2, p. 539.
71 Macken, Autonomy Theme in Karl Barth, pp. 26–27.
subjective response to the Word, who leads us to human autonomy. Thus, the community is the sphere of the encounter with the Word, facilitated by the Spirit, wherein individuals are grasped and set free.

This freedom is necessarily a life of fellowship in which individuals together reflect upon the Word and, through dialogue, hear the expression of God. All persons are submitted mutually to one another and together are submitted mutually to the head of the body, Christ, the living Word. Within this context, real freedom operates creatively and responsibly to reflect the Word to the community and the world. Thus, participating in the community is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for persons to be encountered by God and set free. "There are no saints without the fellowship," but every saint stands addressed by one Lord. In this posture, each hears the command to embrace the freedom of obedience and the summons to fellowship with one another.

Life with God moves one to solidarity in interrelatedness with one's fellows whereby God facilitates freedom in the human sphere. "Human life participates in the freedom of all God's creatures to the extent that it does not have its aim in itself and cannot, therefore, be lived in self-concentration and self-centeredness, but only in a relationship which moves outwards and upwards to another." We are set free for God and others, participating in the community for others and thereby experiencing freedom. The church is a body of individuals dependent on one another for their free existence, focused in one direction, harmoniously responsible to one another, and unified in the correspondence of individual parts, like Barth's admirable Hungarian gypsy band:

... every individual player has his ears and eyes glued on the leading fiddler, concentrating absolutely on the leader's improvisations, and hence playing inevitably and happily with all the others. This is the way we help one another in the practical sphere.

---

72 Macken, Autonomy Theme in Karl Barth, p. 34.
73 CD 3.4, p. 498.
74 CD 4.1, p. 751.
75 CD 2.2, p. 717. "To hear and obey the command of God is always to be on the way to fellowship."
76 CD 3.4, p. 331.
77 CD 3.4, pp. 477-78.
78 ATS, p. 70.
7.5 Individual Freedom: The Responsive Life of Faith

Barth’s understanding of the human being as a free individual does not include isolated solitude. Just as personhood, though experienced as an individual, is constituted in interpersonal encounter, so freedom is constituted in interpersonal relations. Likewise, just as personal existence is a gift of God, so also is human freedom. The presence of the gracious God in human history enables—indeed, demands—a free responsive action on the part of humanity.

God shares with humanity the freedom that belongs properly only to God, thus choosing to commit Godself to each person, bestowing freedom and enabling each person to be what he/she is meant to be. It is not a gift that God gives and the human takes—as though it were an act which, once concluded, distinguishes each party as a separate entity in the transition. It is an ongoing interaction between God and each person: God unconditionally being for the human and the human continually accepting God’s presence and living under God’s sovereignty. As such, it is not a choice between various possible transactions: it is the specific, singular, continual event that links two persons in relation and excludes all ambiguity. In this interrelation, God is the One who establishes personhood and fulfills personal freedom, not primarily to free us from the threats of human existence, but rather, to be (responsively) for God and one another. God reorients each person toward Godself so that he/she is made free in this correspondence with God. Within the sphere of God-granted encounter we experience true freedom.

Throughout Barth’s discussion of human freedom, one must remember that it is God who has (and continues to) set humans free. Through the new covenant fulfilled in Christ, God initiates a bond with humanity—the sphere of freedom. The Creator has granted the whole of creation as a context wherein humanity might be brought into this covenant through the reconciling work of Jesus, and so led to final redemption. The final state, however, is not revealed yet, and we live in an afflicted time, still influenced by the evil of the defeated enemy. Thus, freedom

79Busch, Karl Barth, p. 443.
80CD 3.2, p. 194. This is the uniquely human gift. “Freedom is given to man as every other creature is given its particular gift by God. It is its creaturely mode. It is adapted and therefore proper to him.”
81HOG, p. 65.
82HOG, p. 72.
83HOG, p. 74.
84CD 4.1, pp. 304-05.
85CD 2.2, p. 605.
86CD 4.3.i, pp. 336–37
is limited within the parameters God has set. Outside of these boundaries there is only chaos: within them, freedom is fulfilled. Where the command of God is spoken, order is restored in the form of a person whose presence reorders humanity for freedom. "The command of God sets man free." 87

Such a command does not compel or coerce the human (law), but bestows the courage to overcome fears which bind him/her (grace). God's command permits true freedom in that it begins with consideration for the interconnection of relations within which one is ordered. The need to control ourselves or others no longer binds us—we are free to be ourselves with God and others. God's grace looses us so that we may participate in the work of God: to be for God, for the world, and for our neighbor. 88 Where we lack that which is necessary for freedom, God intercedes and grants us the essential communion with God which brings freedom. God has acted and overcome our inability in Jesus, who has accomplished the miracle of new life for us by his life, death, and resurrection in which we now participate. 89 Human freedom is contingent on the freedom of this One who has set us free. Thus, even the limitations of time and space are not adverse to human freedom, but are the necessary framework in which we participate as covenant partners with God. 90

God-given freedom, 91 which humanity is incapable of otherwise experiencing, is granted in order that it may (and will) love. 92 It is the permission, created within the sphere of the divine accompaniment, to live analogously to the loving, interrelating Trinity. "In this permission the creaturely freedom encounters the divine freedom from which it derives and in which it finds its natural and self-understood limit." 93 Love is our response to the prior divine activity of God and in order to respond, we must be reconditioned and reoriented by the Holy Spirit. Such a metanoia enables us to live in the light of the Gospel and not out of self-confidence. 94 God is concerned for human welfare and because this is so, brings us into correspondence with Godself. This correspondence, faith, exists only in our response of love to God's encounter (in Jesus) and in the experience of freedom enabled by the Holy Spirit. 95 Therefore, faith is freedom for intercourse with

87CD 2.2, p. 586.
88CD 4.3.i, pp. 246-49.
89CD 1.2, pp. 257-58.
92CD 4.2, p. 778.
93CD 3.3, p. 166.
94CD 3.3, p. 364.
95Jungel, God's Being is in Becoming, p. 57.
God and is the source of all other free, human expressions as “God’s partners.”96 Through faith, the Spirit awakens us and gives us access to God, subsequently nourishing and maintaining us so we live in freedom. Faith is the God-created, free correspondence whereby persons exist with God who is for them: it is their dynamic response in the form of obedience to God’s address.

Obedience summons a person to the freedom to which God has called him/her within the limitations of God’s choosing.97 Apart from obedience, we act in self-contradiction. Willing to sin, alienated from God, neighbor, and self, we experience the captivity and rupture of individualism and chaos. Obedience, conversely, is correspondence to God’s command and in correspondence, we experience the fulfillment of personhood and freedom.98

This genuinely human response, enabled by God for God’s purposes, is exactly that which fulfills the grace of God’s goal: to return humans to obedience and hence to freedom.99 Barth understands that “[h]uman freedom is the God-given freedom to obey.”100 The human, left to him/herself, binds him/herself in fear, self-justification, self-perfection, and narcissism. The obedience Barth refers to is our fulfillment—obeying the One who totally loves us is freedom.

We fear obedience because we misconstrue the call of God as a command to surrender our rights—by which we mean individual will and personhood. We err in this understanding because we do not know God. We must know the personal nature of God before we can understand the nature of God’s freedom which is the basis of our own. Knowing this God revealed in Jesus Christ through scripture, we discover that “Obedience is what the Holy Scripture means by freedom”101 and the heart of this command is to love (as Christ has loved us). Ours is still the choice to obey, but it is essentially a choice to love as we have been loved102 rather than a call to surrender our personhood.

Ours is not obedience to a law, but to a person and is the ever-new response to this loving Person. Love, then, is not a principle, but is the experience of interrelation in the dynamic events of everyday life. In such a context, we either use this freedom or we do not: misuse is not possible because disobedience is not freedom. It is, rather, an accident or a form of irrationality which is destruction—a

96 CD 4.2, p. 242. “In this origin which is also its goal, faith is contiguous with the free grace of God, and may be called its anthropological counterpart.” (p. 243).
97 CD 3.4, p. 595.
98 CD 4.2, p. 93.
100 HOG, p. 79.
101 CD 1.2, p. 408.
102 CD 1.2, p. 670.
form of the nothingness which Jesus has overcome. To construe disobedience as freedom, applying the same label to obedience and human chaos (in all its forms), is to render the term meaningless. Freedom can only be true in correspondence with God. Jesus was free because he obeyed the will of the Father: we are free because we live in the obedient Son.

Human freedom is responsible when it is responsive. God has created us for the divine form of freedom, not for a fractured existence which seeks only protection from one another. Freedom is not equivalent to protected (individual) rights: it is corresponding to God and being for other humans, thereby existing in mutual togetherness as a community. Divine freedom does not recognize humans as individual units, but as interrelated persons who are called to live responsibly in their interconnection.

Barth states that "... the being of man is a being in responsibility before God." A human is active in knowing God, deciding for God, and corresponding to God's judgment; therefore, a person is free for God, "... the subject posited by God for free self-positing." Such self-positing responsibility is the act of answering the address of the Word of God and is the (personal) answer of commitment derived from hearing the divine address. Thus, freedom exists in the dialogue established by God, exercised in specific acts, and is shaped in a responsibly-expressed life. It cannot be an ideal or a general concept: it is that response of a real person in real history—a life obediently lived with God. Anything else is not freedom.

Within this relationship of creature and Creator, humans experience real autonomy. God's decision that humans shall be self-determined in the response of obedience and responsibility is within the context of God's decision in Christ. God's theonomy is complete and undetermined, but the autonomy of the human is correlative, dependent on the prior determination of God and lived within the heteronomy of the church (whose freedom is derived from the Word of God). Such autonomy is a free human decision to obey as one who understands the Word to be the sphere of effective operation in which Jesus is answered as Lord. This
submission is not to an external power, but is the choice to adopt personally his way as our own,\textsuperscript{112} admitting that we have been "... summoned, authorized and empowered to exercise [our] own thinking and speaking by the grace of God" and, therefore, we think and act in humility and modesty before God because we know that in ourselves we are liars and self-deceived and hence self-destructive.\textsuperscript{113} Autonomy is dependent on God in order that it might bring real freedom, rather than ruin.

Therefore, one can affirm that humans have freedom of choice in the exercise of response to God's election of grace—within the context of the community of grace. Each person is responsible for his/her relationship with God and with other persons, "... to will himself to be a member of God's household which God willed him to be."\textsuperscript{114} God's freedom allows humans to act, but the truly free choice is always the obedient one. Disobedience is not freedom: it is a disastrous usurpation of God's lordship. Were Adam and Eve free before or after their disobedience? Their true freedom was evidenced in their life of unashamed fellowship with God and one another. Outside of this context, human responsibility exceeds human capacity. Attempts to replace or usurp God always bring death and chaos because we depend on God's theonomy for our very life as well as for our freedom.\textsuperscript{115} Can we choose freedom? Yes, if by such we mean choosing obedience to the will of God; otherwise, we are prisoners whose "free will" is sin and ours is the (unfree) choice of shame and death.\textsuperscript{116} God is for individuals and opposes that which will eventuate in death.

Each individual exists in freedom as one loved and elected in Christ by God and so personal freedom is not private freedom.\textsuperscript{117} Notions of private freedom misunderstand the person as an isolated unit whereas the concept of personal freedom recognizes the individuality of a person, but (rightly) affirms the relational nature of persons. Activities that merely cultivate private concerns are not "free" because they lead to destruction—and, ultimately, death.

Human freedom is for the sake of life and begins in encounter with God. Such is not an encounter of objects, but of persons—in which God is the superior who grants life. Through our response to God in Christ, we are not only made free for God, we are also made free to be for our neighbor. In the one act of responding

\textsuperscript{112}CD 1.2, p. 859.
\textsuperscript{113}CD 1.2, p. 884.
\textsuperscript{114}HOG, pp. 75–76.
\textsuperscript{115}CD 3.1, pp. 260–65.
\textsuperscript{116}TT, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{117}CD 4.4 CL, p. 95.

214
to Jesus, we experience freedom for both God and humanity\textsuperscript{118} and freedom to address God intimately as Father.\textsuperscript{119}

In this response, we are freed from fear for love. Humans escape the fear that binds them by confessing to God. "He who confesses, no longer has to fear. In the act of confession he steps out into the freedom of God, in which he, too, may be free."\textsuperscript{120} The Holy Spirit moves persons into their proper mode of living. "Where he is present, there is no servitude but freedom,"\textsuperscript{121} The Spirit liberates us into the spontaneous love which corresponds to the love of God, who loves in freedom. "It is an act in which man is at work, not as God's puppet, but with his own heart and soul and strength, as an independent subject who encounters and replies to God and is responsible to Him as His partner."\textsuperscript{122} In love for others, we determine ourselves to be those who are God's people and we affirm (with God) that God's judgments are true.

We are also freed for active service. Freedom is never idle or isolated. It is creatively involved with God and our fellow-human, accomplishing the tasks God commands.\textsuperscript{123} We become doers of the Word, children of God. By living out of Christ's life, we actively answer the summons of the One who calls us. Service within the creaturely sphere corresponds to the divine life and is oriented by God's purposes,\textsuperscript{124} freeing us to live as real persons whose character is that of a gift,\textsuperscript{125} for which we have been freed by the Holy Spirit. Such service is not forced upon us. Rather, it is granted to us in creaturely time and space with real opportunities to respond with our own expression.\textsuperscript{126} True freedom is living for God and neighbor. Service does not imply posturing before God in reverent proximity or grateful repose.\textsuperscript{127} It is belonging to God openly, gladly, in a dynamic relation. In this free relation of being with—and belonging to—God, personhood is constituted.\textsuperscript{128} "Humanity lives and moves and has its being in this freedom to be oneself with the other, and oneself to be with the other."\textsuperscript{129} The reverse relation of not being

\textsuperscript{118}CD 2.2, p. 622.
\textsuperscript{119}CD 4.4 CL, pp. 71–72, 234.
\textsuperscript{120}CD 4.2, p. 785.
\textsuperscript{121}CD 4.2, p. 786.
\textsuperscript{122}CD 3.4, p. 470.
\textsuperscript{123}CD 3.4, p. 474.
\textsuperscript{124}CD 1.2, pp. 367–69.
\textsuperscript{125}CD 3.4, pp. 500, 550.
\textsuperscript{126}HOG, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{127}CD 4.3.i, p. 381.
\textsuperscript{128}CD 3.2, p. 272.
with God is not to be truly human, and hence, not free. Using the freedom loaned to us for God's service, we cooperate with God and experience the freedom of conscience ("knowing with God") instead of restriction under another authority. Freeing and raising the conscience, God enables humans to accept God's revelation as right and to live in freedom with the Word who is our Lord.

Because the Lord is for our neighbor, we are truly free in also being for our neighbor, and edifying the community. Our personal freedom to assist the other looses that one from the difficulties of human life so as to experience (freeing) love. Because we are freed to be with God, we are enabled to exist obediently in loving cooperation with our peers.

Subsequent to recognizing that we are free by being with God and others, we begin to understand what we are free from. Summarily, we are freed from alienation (from God and neighbor) and the consequences of that estrangement. We are freed from sin, even in the midst of our bondage. In Christ, we are gifted with God's reconciliation that liberates us from a bondage we do not perceive until we have been released from it. Christ frees us from the prison of pride and simultaneous shame that is proper to humans in their alienated state. He eradicates the egotistic self-protection that distinguishes persons who are for themselves rather than for God. Because God is for us, we no longer fear falling short of (arbitrary) standards set by religious systems which vary only in their degrees of rejection. Instead, we stand before God (the righteous judge), who has liberated us and releases us from an emphasis on performance and conformity to rigid opinions—which inevitably shape us. These can never be freedom, indeed they are relinquishments of freedom because they seek to escape the God who is partisan for humanity.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that freedom is not submissive to an alien master who overrides our wishes. Freedom begins in, and proceeds from, the overwhelming love of God in Christ, who comes and transforms us so that we spontaneously, willingly, respond. Joyful response to God is freedom and in such response we are awakened to new life, engulfed in the freeing, loving presence of God. This loving encounter begins a journey of freedom in which we live a life of acknowledging, accepting, and living in the embrace of One who is unabashedly for

130 TT, p. 59.
131 CD 1.2, p. 696.
132 CD 3.4, p. 500.
133 CD 4.2, p. 531.
134 CD 4.1, p. 544.
135 CD 2.2, p. 597.
136 FT, p. 37.
137 CD 3.2, p. 74.
us, 138 What can we do then but be thankful? We are with God and fellow humanity, realizing in retrospect that gladness is the mark of true personal encounter. 139 We are free persons because God makes us so by being personally free for us. "Our freedom to give thanks, and our freedom in thanksgiving, are the consequence corresponding to the divine work and light and word of grace addressed to us in the life of Jesus Christ." 140

Karl Barth defines freedom fundamentally as a responsive life in encounter with God which is the fulfillment of personhood. Such is not a category of existence, but is the unique dynamic relation created by God in each person's life within the transforming embrace of God. Freedom then, is experienced in the sharing of this divine life in a response of joyful gratitude.

### 7.6 Erroneous Definitions of Freedom

Imitating Barth's methodology, errors may be disclosed only after the truth has been described from the content of God's revelation. With respect to the topic of freedom, it cannot be defined independently from God. No human activity can establish freedom in opposition to God—not even in hell can one be independent of God. 141 Notions of freedom which do not recognize this fundamental reality are fallacious, in need of a corrective response.

Freedom, wrongly understood, is depicted as a capacity latent within the human, a possibility that merely needs to be unleashed. 142 However, freedom is grounded in God, not in humanity and whatever moves a person away from God is an "impossible possibility" belonging to the realm of demonic nothingness: it is mere illusion.

Furthermore, human freedom cannot be earned, 143 and human efforts to do so deny God's gift of freedom in Christ. Such denial leads to self-satisfied chaos and resembles the naive confidence of children attempting to drive a car—their confidence lies in their ignorance of the eventual self-destruction of such an action.

Although freedom is God-given, it is not a passive state of reposed collection. 144 It is an active life of response to the gifting grace of God, who summons us to a

---

138 HOUG, pp. 75–76.
139 CD 3.2, pp. 266–67.
140 CD 4.3.i, p. 82.
141 CD 4.1, p. 534.
142 CD 3.2, p. 195.
143 HOUG, p. 72.
144 CD 3.2, p. 195.
shared communion. Therefore, it is not a charitable donation which can be used or abused as the person chooses, but is the very contingency upon which human personhood and existence is based.

Freedom is not the right to choose between obedience and disobedience because freedom can only exist within the sphere of obedience. Acts which occur outside of the lordship of God reflect rebellion rather than freedom. We are not neutral creatures whose choices are merely ours to make: we are God's and to choose other than God is to will our undoing and self-destruction. Our choice, therefore, is not whether to walk in light or in darkness (one eliminates the other), but to respond to the freedom of obedience and to leave behind darkness so as to walk in the light.

Modern attempts to attain freedom outside of God merely reflect the rebellion in the garden of Eden and recreate the isolation of Adam and Eve's banishment.

"The doctrine of the autonomy of the free creature over against God is simply the theological form of human enmity against God's grace, the theological actualization of a repetition of the fall." Consequently, all modern attempts to claim a freedom for the individual immediately violate the basis of true freedom by their denial of the gift of God's freedom only serve to affirm the fallenness of humanity.

\[145\text{ CD 3.1, p. 264.}\]
\[146\text{ True freedom, then, is in obedience, not in the juxtaposed choice between good and evil. See DIO, p. 56.}\]
\[147\text{ TF, p. 37.}\]
\[148\text{ CD 3.2, p. 285.}\]
\[149\text{ CD 2.1, p. 586.}\]
8

Summary and Evaluation

Each of the three writers acknowledges that God is essential to human personhood\(^1\) and all three are concerned that persons be free (though all three conceive this differently). Characteristically, each describes freedom as maximally fulfilling the conditions of personhood. In this chapter I will seek to show the peculiarities of each.

From the context of their anthropologies and understandings of freedom, I can address the issues of internal coherence and correspondence with external reality. A subsequent comparison of the three further contextualizes a critique of each relative to the others. Finally, a positive synthesis of their contributions facilitates a proper understanding of free personhood.

8.1 John Macmurray: Summary and Critical Evaluation

8.1.1 Summary of Free Personal Existence

John Macmurray's theistic framework is based on his assumption that God has created humanity with the capacity for personhood, which is evidenced initially by the relationship of mother and child. He believes this capacity is the integral element of personal relationships—which are constituted by the fulfillment of the capacity for interrelation. He believes that God intends humanity to exist as a

---

\(^1\)However, not all three are trinitarian theologians (Only Barth and Zizioulas make this claim). Thus, the unfortunate (and inaccurate) listing of all three as recent writers in trinitarian theology in the bibliography of the British Council of Church's *The Forgotten Trinity* series. Although these three propose a relational ontology of personhood, they do not intend the same thing by that phrase.
community of friends whose relations are based on the motive of love for one another.

According to Macmurray, Jesus discovered the personal nature of humanity and taught humans to act from the love motive so as to be fulfilled persons. It is precisely the act toward another with intention to fulfill a personal relationship that makes us persons. By consciously fulfilling our intention, reflecting upon our act, and repeating the process of conscious, reflective action, we further our relationship with the Other and experience freedom through personal fulfillment. Through proper integration and correspondence with others—as friends in the personal nexus—Macmurray believes the world will experience peace.

8.1.2 Critique of Macmurray’s Work

Although making astute observations regarding the failure of the western understanding of the person, Macmurray has only partially succeeded in proposing a new ontology due to several important factors which I will now discuss.

First, Macmurray has confused his philosophical task with the task of theology. Claiming the role of a philosopher in his analysis of the problem of the person, he attempts to interpret the universe realistically from the vantage point of an observer. However, because he bases his entire understanding of personhood on the intention of God, his is a theistic, rather than anthropocentric framework. His reference to the intention of God for a specific form of existence for humanity contradicts his self-identification as a philosopher and places him squarely in the role of theologian.

Second, his confused role has caused him to present an inadequate understanding of Christ. As a theologian, his responsibility is to explore the means of rightly hearing the Word so as to articulate properly and coherently the intention of God. Instead, he proposes an Ebionite form of Christology in which Christ discovers the field of the personal and reveals God’s intention in the form of teachings, rather than existing as God incarnate. Herein lies Macmurray’s rationalistic reconstruction of Christianity and his departure from a scientific theology of Christ.

Third, his impoverished Christology has left him to form an idealistic basis to his system. His a priori adoption of an agenda of world peace (through properly understood personhood) ignores Christ’s self-definition as God (who is our peace) and his unique identity as true person. In addition to an inadequate Christology, his pneumatology is also impoverished by his claim that humans stand in relation to God as the personal Other by virtue of their capacity for relationships—not through Christ or the Holy Spirit. Although Macmurray mentions Father, Son, and Spirit, each appears to act independently. Apparently, the Father is a unitary
God who gave special insight to the human Jesus, and the Spirit is the bond of love (i.e., the spirit of human community). Macmurray consequently asserts that religion’s failures result from its refusal to facilitate human capacity, rather than from fallacious conceptions of God. Macmurray has employed his own natural powers of reason to define personhood rather than listening fully to Christ.

Unfortunately, Macmurray contradicts his realistic system by beginning with an ideal agenda; that of correcting the world’s problems (war and individualism) by facilitating friendship. The ideal of peace was the basis upon which he studied personhood, believing that properly understood personhood would facilitate harmonious relationships and, hence, worldwide peace.2

He approves Marx’s critique of religion (that it idealistically promised a better life in the hereafter), but concludes that Marx came under the jurisdiction of his own criticisms; chiefly, that communism also made idealistic promises of a better life in the temporal future and although the focal points differed, both were founded on idealism. Ironically, Macmurray’s promise of peace, contingent upon mutual, proper formulations of personhood so as to facilitate global peace and fulfill freedom, is condemned by the same critique. He, too, promises a better world based on the condition of human cooperation.

Therefore, contrary to his claim to interpret the universe through immediate experience, Macmurray arbitrarily selects and interprets only those elements which specifically relate to, and substantiate, his ideal of world peace. Had he proceeded in a thoroughly scientific manner, he would have addressed God’s intention (for peace or otherwise) and allowed God, in Christ, to define that intention and its conditions. Instead, he distances himself from God and fosters hope in humanity to exercise its capacity for friendship and realize peace. Macmurray’s freedom, therefore, is a potentiality based on a prior anthropological capacity.3

Fourth, Macmurray consequently based authority on human capacities and is anthropocentric. Hence, he reveals his willingness to listen to the words of natural theology alongside of—and, indeed, overshadowing—the words of Christ. But, as Barth contended, if one’s presuppositions are allowed to permeate one’s articulation of the revealed Word, the resulting formulations are simply forms of heresy. Macmurray’s attempt to substantiate his theistic system through rational and empirical arguments supports his concept of personhood with the phenomenon of human existence. His reliance on human reason, therefore, further departs from

2 Contra Duncan’s evaluation, On the Nature of Persons, p. 57. In SRR he reflects on his life and acknowledges that his philosophical enterprise was employed to end war and bring peace and friendship to the world.

3 Barth’s criticism of liberal, Protestant theology, which is based in the capabilities of the human for God, applies here. (See CD 1.1, p. 41).
faith, which he claims is his starting point.

Fifth, he thus undermines the actuality of freedom already provided in Christ. In his departure from actualities grounded in God, Macmurray defects from what could have been his role as a theologian and returns to his originally claimed role as a humanitarian pacifist philosopher and, as a philosopher, bases his system on hopeful, speculative idealism.

His descent into anthropocentrism overshadows his attempts to affirm the reality of God. The Christian notion of Christ's completed work on our behalf accomplishes the goal he intends; however, Macmurray fails to recognize this due to his emphasis on human actualization of peace. His hope for freedom relies on persons to realize their nature as relationally constituted creatures, not on knowing God through Christ; therefore, freedom is not a gift—as Macmurray claims—but is the consequence of the intention to be friends. By depicting Christ as a teacher who taught about humanity's natural capacity to be free persons, he abandons his identified beginning point in realism and commits himself to a humanly achieved and rationally conditioned system.

Moreover, believing in human capacity to achieve freedom, Macmurray fails to recognize the significance of the fall. Hence, he can speak of potential freedom in the field of the future, outlining the conditions for individual and international potentialities. Although he intends to be realistic and scientific, his prior agenda of world peace, selective theology, and phenomenological empiricism combine to form a purely speculative and idealistic notion of freedom. Furthermore, he fails to establish true ontological humanity in Christ because he depicts Christ as a human who teaches us about God's created order—not as the focal point of true personhood. Instead, he generalizes humanity and personhood as class concepts and ignores the actuality of the One, particular, human, Jesus Christ. Thus, he can propose an ideal state of human existence; however, as Macmurray himself observes, idealism can never lead to freedom.

8.1.3 Contributions of Macmurray's Work

In spite of his various weaknesses, Macmurray lends valuable insight to the debate on freedom in personal existence. First, his critique of the dualistic errors of Kantian thought and of the idealism of the Romantics and his observations of the

\[ \text{It is difficult to criticize Macmurray for failing to expand a Christian doctrine when it is questionable as to whether he seeks to pursue Christian theology at all. However, it is certainly possible to criticize the failure of his reductionistic approach to Christian theology.}\]

\[ \text{Contra Karl Barth, who asserts that our actual, completed freedom is in Christ and is experienced through obedient response to what we already are.}\]
phenomenon of human existence need not be shunned merely because he fails to escape his own criticisms. He commendably assesses the unity of the world in its relation to God’s creative activity, emphasizing the irrelevance of presuppositions which divide the world or the nature of the person.

Second, he presents an integrated view of reality: we are persons by virtue of being in the world and participating personally with the Other. He reflects a firm belief that God is the One who maintains the unity of the cosmos.

Third, he depicts the self as a unified agent, participating in the world. Macmurray reinstates the value of human emotional experience and affirms that both human creativity and rational endeavors are necessary to fulfill personhood.

Fourth, he does not collapse human agency into a new form of individualism; instead, he provides a relational ontology of personhood that is constituted by relationships. Where Macmurray might have focused on the agency of the human, he took the precaution of ensuring that the form of the personal is recognized as fundamental to human existence.

Fifth, he summons persons to live scientifically and emphasizes that real thinking and feeling do not compel Christianity to be at odds with science. Rather, he proposed that Christianity enables its proper task. Thus, Macmurray invites the sciences and Christianity to pursue their tasks more adequately by mutually supporting one another.

Sixth, Macmurray provides a reasonable goal by urging persons to be friends. His concern for fulfillment in personhood and a better world are commendable and although his means might be inadequate, the goal is indeed a worthy one.

Of the three writers, he is the most accessible and his presentation of a relational ontology is the most easily understood—even if he is phenomenologically selective. Although his work has not impacted most academic circles, this was not his intended audience. He desired to change the world and to bring peace—an admirable goal, even if overly optimistic and speculative. His challenges to prevailing traditions accurately exposed their errors and offered a phenomenological approach to understanding the personal nature of the human. Although inadequate as a presupposition, it is nevertheless valuable if explicated in the context of a truly trinitarian theology.

8.2 John Zizioulas: Summary and Critical Evaluation

8.2.1 Summary of Free Personal Existence

John Zizioulas, an ecumenical theologian, hopes to reconcile East and West through a mutually acceptable, proper understanding of God. Addressing the ontology of
God, he proposes that God's being is as communion⁶ in the going out of Godself via the incarnation of the Son and dispatchment of the Spirit, by the Father, to the world in order to institute historically and, presently, to constitute the church. According to Zizioulas, persons know God through baptism into the church—where they exchange biological being (en route to death) for ecclesial being and, through participation in the Eucharist, transcend history by the work of the Holy Spirit. This purposed escape enables humans to participate in the being of God in the realm of the eschaton, and by sharing God's communing existence, to be free.

### 8.2.2 Critique of Zizioulas' Work

Zizioulas contributes an orthodox interpretation on the nature of personhood, but is somewhat problematic due to his internal inconsistency.

First, he confuses his task as a theologian with that of a philosopher. Although he understands the problem of personhood as a theological one, Zizioulas engages in philosophical discussions of ontology independent of the Word—as a theologian ought not to do.⁷ Establishing an accurate ontology of God is not primarily a theological concern: it is the task of a philosopher. The theologian seeks to interpret the Word to humanity rather than to explain God's nature on independent grounds. Hence, whereas Macmurray fulfilled a theological task in the guise of a philosopher, Zizioulas reverses the order and works as a philosopher in the guise of a theologian. A theologian is concerned to address issues (including that of reconciliation) from the context of God; a philosopher, from the human context.

This confusion of roles leads to his second area of inconsistency: as a philosopher, Zizioulas performs his task inadequately. A philosopher derives systems of thought based on analyses of concrete reality. However, Zizioulas refuses to rely on the Jesus of history as the concrete revelation of God because he seeks to avoid gnosiology. Bypassing Jesus in this regard, he becomes entangled in mysticism whereby revelation is merely a subjective experience, unconditioned by the concrete revelation of God in Christ. Consequently, he does not address the actuality

---

⁶His somewhat grammatically awkward phrase "as communion" in place of the more conventional "in communion" is intentional.

⁷Whenever someone makes a claim about the being of God or presupposes to know God they must be able to give some account regarding how they acquired that knowledge. Otherwise, says Barth, one is merely speaking as a philosopher, according to human traditions and observations (or possibly mythologizing). Zizioulas gives no statement of his epistemology and, in general, simply speaks out of his tradition and his observations of his church. Thus Zizioulas is engaging in philosophy and not articulating the being of God from God's own revelation, which, for Barth, is proper theology. For him, all other discussion, even about God, is based on a human love of wisdom (philosophy), but is not based in God's own self-interpretation (theology).
of prior reconciliation between God and humanity in Christ, and so focuses on the yet-to-be-realized need for eastern-western reconciliation. By doing so, he engages in speculative philosophy, specifically referential to the ontology of God, rather than in scientific theology. He is emphatic that “Orthodoxy concerning the being of God is not a luxury for the Church and for man: it is an existential necessity.” Therefore, he is a philosophical theologian whose focus is primarily philosophical, rather than theological.

Third, Zizioulas’ appeal for ecclesial communion is based rationally. Ironically, he attempts to realize his overarching goal of reconciliation by correcting the confessionalistic attitude of the west, and proposes, in its place, a synthesis of eastern and western theologies, answering the problem of confessionalism with a new, mutually agreeable confession! Despite his distaste for confessionalism, it pervades his system. His insistence on orthodoxy as the means of reconciliation betrays a rationalistic foundation. He desires to modify current formulations of personhood in order to reconcile the church and to bring persons to share in its meta-historical existence. Such a focus belies the fact of God’s personal address and encounter in Christ, challenging the fact that this encounter is one by which persons are constituted. According to Zizioulas’ proposal, if personhood is to be fulfilled and freedom is to be realized, one must first rightly formulate an understanding of personhood and the Eucharist and subsequently believe that this event facilitates a transcendence and enables persons to share in the eschaton. This mystical form of rationalism, despite its focus on another (higher) reality, is conceived in the realm of human reason.

Fourth, Zizioulas critiques confessionalism from a human perspective, rather than a divine one. His phenomenologically based observations of the division between the human institutions of the “eastern church” and the “western church” result in a diagnosis that is empirical in nature and a resolution that is idealistic. Relying on observation, he seems to ignore the actuality that the church is already one in Christ. Had he seriously engaged with the revelation of God in Christ and the already completed fact of unity in Christ, he would—as a theologian—summon the human church organizations (east and west) to be what they are in Christ. However, his empirical and philosophical presuppositions do not reflect his claim to be a theologian.

Fifth, his definition of ecclesial unity is not Christologically derived, but appears to be organizationally so. Addressing the need for a unified, institutional (human) church, he speaks as an ecclesial pacifist. Just as Macmurray brought a

---

8BAC, p. 15. This emphasis on orthodoxy reveals his concern for rationalism.
9BAC, p. 26. He believes the rational basis of western Christianity is the problem.
humanitarian agenda to his task, so Zizioulas brings an ecumenical agenda to his
task. Basing their work on a priori agendas, both have defined them from a human
perspective—war exists; the church is divided—rather than from a Christological
context.

Neither Macmurray’s definition of peace nor Zizioulas’ definition of unity is
based on the actuality of Christ and, therefore, neither manages to extricate himself
from idealism and the speculation of possibility. By centering his understanding of
unity in phenomenological observations, Zizioulas has over-estimated the capacity
of human institutions and entered the foray as an idealist whose humanly defined
unity can find fulfillment only in the future.

Sixth, Zizioulas’ reliance on empirical observation results in a consequent
anthropocentric understanding of personhood in which the institutional church
is the focal point of the potential new order of fulfilled persons. Here, then,
Zizioulas’ criticism of western rationalism is applicable to himself. He seeks a
rational resolution to the problem of division. His historical and lexical study arises
from a concern for right thinking in hopes of fostering right action. By relying on
credal formulation to establish the unity of the church, he affirms the existence of
a “church” independent of God, whose power and authority is its own. Although
Zizioulas would likely deny such an independent existence, his resolution to the
problem of disunity suggests that it is implicit in his system—by virtue of the fact
that the essential requirement for unity is human-orchestrated orthodoxy.

Seventh, Zizioulas is an idealist. According to Macmurray, an idealist is one
who seeks to escape from the realities of this world by promising a better life in the
future or eternity. Despite his affirmations of the historical existence of the church,
Zizioulas grounds reality and truth in “another world.” Had he consistently
maintained that truth comes from another person, as he previously affirmed (truth
comes from the Father), he would have remained internally coherent; however,
his focus shifts from a person-derived truth to a more general sphere of truth, the
eschaton, which is a separate reality.

These internal inconsistencies show cumulatively that his presentation is rid­
dled with theological difficulties. He speaks of the being of one God as communion—and then divides the Trinity into economic and eternal modes, which are neither
equivalent nor cohesive. His dualism between time and eternity is not bridged
in Christ; rather, he implies that there are two forms of time. Furthermore, had
he maintained his original assertion that being is communion, he probably would

10 Whereas Macmurray’s focus is on an individual scale, Zizioulas addresses the issue of right
thinking on a larger one: the institutional churches of east and west.
11 BAC, p. 115.
have recognized that Christ is adequate to reveal the nature of God. Unfortunately, he departs from his original, consistent premises and simultaneously weakens his Christology and his doctrine of revelation.

Describing Christ as one who takes on human form to identify with and to affirm human existence, Zizioulas paradoxically determines him to be one who, through the Spirit's work, escapes "the bondage of history." Such a statement negates the original premise that Christ came to affirm human existence! Whereas Macmurray followed the Ebionite error, Zizioulas' devaluation of Christ's biological existence echoes the Docetic one.

Zizioulas contends that Christology cannot properly be based on the human Jesus because he is subject to individualism and death. Rather, Christ exists now as the eternal head of the church, conditioned by the Spirit's work and his historical significance rises from his role of instituting the church. According to Zizioulas, the crucial factor in the present is the Spirit, who connects us with the eternal Christ as he truly is in the eschaton—rather than with the historical Jesus. Thus, the church community is constituted by the Spirit—in communion. In that moment of Eucharistic participation, the Christ-truth, Christ-event, or personal existence of Christ is actualized as his body, the ecclesial community. There is no separation between Christology and ecclesiology: the community becomes, is, and constitutes Christ.

Unfortunately, Zizioulas has extended his Christology too far: in baptism, persons become Christ. Christ no longer addresses us as our high priest, the I who constitutes our Thou, but is the metamorphized conglomeration of human participants in the ecclesial community. This community of persons is not addressed by the Word in personal encounter: it is swept into the eternal to share mystically in

12 BAC, p. 130.
13 BAC, p. 55, footnote 49. In the resurrection, Christ moved beyond biological being; thus, Zizioulas argues, "... the real hypostasis of Christ was proved not to be the biological one, but the eschatological or trinitarian hypostasis." See Alan Lewis, "The Burial of God: Rupture and Resumption as the Story of Salvation," SJT 40 (1987): 350, footnote 31. In view of the evidence that Zizioulas' presentation of Jesus does not affirm historical existence, but overcomes it by escaping it, Lewis has assessed Zizioulas rather kindly as flirting with Docetism.
14 BAC, p. 109, footnote 108. According to Zizioulas, if Jesus has a biological hypostasis, he is bound to the problems of biological existence, and that is something he cannot accede willingly because he fears ethical and psychological interpretations of personhood based in the human Jesus. Had he recognized, as Barth did, that the personhood of Jesus is revealed precisely in his becoming human—thereby unveiling the relational nature of personhood as the obedient Son of the Father and the fellow-human on behalf of all humanity—he would discard his fears.
15 BAC, p. 111.
16 BAC, p. 113.
God’s being, simultaneously abandoning the historical Christ because “The raised Christ is unimaginable as an individual; He is the ‘first-born of many brothers,’ establishing His historical identity in and through the communion-event which is the Church.”

Although Zizioulas affirms that Christ has defined the church, what actually occurs, in his formulation, is that the church defines both the personal existence of Christ and human personhood. He appears to have granted the church an ecclesial capacity to constitute persons. Baptism is the vehicle of transformation in which the participant is given a new hypostasis and personhood, then, is ecclesiastically-conditioned. Commendably, he has observed that humans are not potential persons because of human capacity, contra Macmurray, but he inappropriately places their potential in ecclesial capacity and in so doing, echoes Macmurray’s anthropocentrism. If real personhood is acquired through the ecclesial community, it is still a human institution which actualizes human potential.

Furthermore, due to the Docetic influence on his Christology, he has empowered the human institution of the church with the capacity to endow personhood such that each person becomes “a complete Christ, and in the Eucharist each communicant is transformed into the whole body of Christ, so in the same Spirit the very structure of the Church becomes the existential structure of each person.”

Although he asserts that the Spirit is at work, his articulation of the role of the bishop, who administers the baptism and offers the Eucharist, suggests that the center of activity is the bishop rather than the Spirit.

Through the church, then, persons know God; hence, his epistemology is not grounded in Christ: it is knowledge obtained through the church with “the eyes of worship.” Through the Eucharist, persons transcend linear history and enter a vertical dimension which transforms history. En route, such participants acquire a vision of the future, of the eschaton. This “portal into eternity,” which the church becomes in the Eucharist, according to Zizioulas, enables persons to see

17 BAC, p. 114, footnote 116.
18 Here we turn to Barth’s criticism of Roman Catholicism: its attempt to transmit the knowledge of God—which rightfully belonged in the address of personal encounter—shifted the focus from God to the church and participation in the church became the condition for relationship with God (CD 1.1, p. 41).
20 Note: to qualify as an administrator in this capacity, the bishop must be an Orthodox bishop—once again raising the concern that perhaps Zizioulas is more dependent on confessionalism than he believes. It appears that proper confessions qualify one for participation in (or administration of) the sacraments.
21 BAC, p. 17.
22 BAC, p. 115.
God “as He is,” in eternal triune existence. This experience, granted through the church to those who are initiated, resembles eschatological gnosticism rather than the dynamic interrelationship of “being in communion.”

By limiting the context of sharing the being of God (and, hence, personhood) to participation in the (institutional) church, Zizioulas disallows personal constitution through God’s specific address to particular beings. His is a modified version of analogia entis, we exist “precisely in the manner in which God also subsists as being” (italics his). Personhood, therefore, does not have to do with friendship, equality, or encounter: it is a mystical sharing in the being of God in the eschaton. According to Zizioulas, we are potential persons who can experience a potential freedom through the church; therefore, he ignores our actualized freedom in Christ. This speculative emphasis on potentiality marks Zizioulas as an idealist philosopher whose models of personhood rise from anthropocentric concerns.

His emphasis on escape from biological existence lends an otherworldly character to freedom—one which defies human language and ethical concerns. Accessible only through the vehicle of the (Orthodox) church, it finds very little practical application or expression in the historical dimension. Furthermore, Zizioulas’ concerns for creation also appear to be escapist: humans are priests who act as intermediaries, lifting creation out of its created order to God in the act of worship.

His thesis that being is in communion should have resulted in a paradigm in which communities of persons mutually interrelate in dynamic interchange and experience freedom. Instead, he depicts a hierarchical ecclesiology in which relational ministry has more to do with the ordering of an institution and the ordination of certain persons than with a community of equally free, though not synonymously gifted, persons. In such a system, persons are not free to obey Christ; they are constrained by allegiance and submission to the rule of an institution. He gives no place for freedom as response to the free love of Christ, who meets us in

23 Such depictions suggest a mystical form of knowledge. In this revelation-event of Eucharistic participation, the Eucharist is no longer a sacrament, but is “something parallel to the divine word” (BAC, p. 22). As Barth argued, any word granted equality with The Word (Christ) is alien and subject to challenge. It is precisely this experience which Zizioulas believes constitutes personhood. I suggest that the act of going out of ourselves—transcending biological existence—so as to share in the being of God, whose being is in going out, is a form of mystical ecstasy rather than ek-stasis.

24 BAC, p. 55. Although it appears that this refers only to Christ, note that Zizioulas follows this with the claim “…with regard to God, but now also with regard to man the basis of ontology is the person. Just as God “is” what He is in His nature, “perfect God,” only as person, so too man in Christ is “perfect man” only as hypostasis, as freedom and love.” Zizioulas, then, believes that through our participation in the church we actually, rather than analogically, have the being of Christ through theosis and, thus, our personhood.
personal encounter and who is with us in—and affirms—our earthly existence. He does not recognize the accomplished freedom that we have in Christ. Indeed, it appears that Zizioulas' escape into otherworldly freedom is for those who submit to the Orthodox tradition and rationally believe that they are sharing in the being of God in eternity. According to Macmurray's definition, such idealistic freedom is, ultimately, no freedom at all.

8.2.3 Contributions of Zizioulas' Work

In spite of his problems, Zizioulas has made extremely significant contributions to the study of personhood. First, although his ontology fails to reveal why he believes that the being of God is in communion, his portrayal of communion as an ontological category in the Trinity is helpful and is the necessary contingency upon which a subsequent personal ontology needs to be formed. Such a properly derived ontology serves to correct the western misconception of substantial natures existing prior to personhood as Zizioulas intends. Of the three contributors to this discussion, Zizioulas has the most understandable formulation of the nature of the Trinity because he genuinely affirms the personhood of each and does not resort to the language of "modes" in describing God.

Second, his is the most constructive description of the work of the Spirit in constituting the church and the person. Barth may have developed his pneumatology had he lived, but we owe thanks to Zizioulas for an outstanding contribution to our understanding of pneumatology based on the theology of the patristic fathers. His emphasis on the pneumatological dimension of the church is a much needed answer to the imbalance of western rationalistic, often pietistic, Christianity. Zizioulas, despite his allowance of ecclesial capacities, clearly affirms the necessity of the Spirit for the church's existence—an emphasis often neglected in western Christianity.

Third, his study of the etymology surrounding personhood provides an excellent basis for understanding western shortcomings. Despite his somewhat arbitrary allegiance to eastern Orthodoxy and the mysticism which pervades his thought, he has contributed substantially to the debate regarding this issue. Depicting communion as an ontological category, he has furnished the church with an alternative to substantial models of personhood.

Fourth, his desire to initiate religious reconciliation between east and west is indeed a worthy one. Although the criticism from a western thinker may seem harsh at points—particularly with respect to his anthropocentric idealism and dualism, mysticism, and approach to solving the problem of division—they are put forth for the purpose of urging both east and west, as members of the one body, to challenge each others' presuppositions and theologies and avoid the tragedy of supplanting
Christ with confession.

8.3 Karl Barth: Summary and Critical Evaluation

8.3.1 Summary of Free Personal Existence

Karl Barth, as a theologian, summons the church to understand properly the Word of God, who has been revealed and addresses it as Lord. God, though distinct from humanity, shares humanity and is for and with persons. Freely acting in love, God elects humanity through the One elect human who fulfills personal existence in correspondence to God on behalf of fallen humanity: Jesus Christ. Barth believes that true personhood actualized in Christ is faithful, simultaneous, correspondence with God and humanity.

Christ provides the analogy for understanding human personhood. It is not an analogy of being, as though God and humans share the same form of being (in relation); one cannot observe human correspondence and subsequently know God. Rather, God encounters us in Christ as an I who constitutes us as a Thou in Christ’s being in correspondence. There are, however, subsequent correspondences—that of maleness and femaleness and that with our peers. Therefore, because true personhood is only actual in Christ, correspondence in humanity is subsequent, and contingent upon, him. Christ encounters humanity and addresses its constituents personally. The Holy Spirit enables this encounter whereby one hears the Word’s address and is given freedom.

Finally, then, freedom is experienced as fulfilled personhood in the response to the Word and in a life of faith and obedience. Even this response, Barth contends, is actualized in Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit. Hence, neither human capacity nor ecclesial activity can realize personhood or freedom: it is a gift of God, already completed in Christ—whose shared obedience constitutes freedom in fulfilled personhood.

8.3.2 Critique of Barth’s Work

Barth understands the problem of personhood to be a theological one—by which, he means that we must listen to the Word of God, witnessed to in scripture in order to understand God’s intention\(^{25}\) and God’s nature,\(^{26}\) but most importantly, to hear

\(^{25}\)This was Macmurray’s concern.

\(^{26}\)This was Zizioulas’ concern.
what God has to say to us. Listening to God in Christ, we hear that we are loved, have been reconciled in Christ, and are, therefore, new persons who are truly free.

Wanting to bring no prior agenda to his task of listening, Barth attempts simply to hear what is spoken and, in the hearing, to interpret the Word in the church. He recognizes that interpretation requires human words, but he is concerned more for personal encounter than for precise formulations of mutually agreeable confessions. In personal encounter, Christ is Lord of his church and brings the freedom of fulfilled personhood; therefore, Barth’s dialogue on freedom has its genesis in the person of Christ.

While some may perceive that Barth’s agenda was that of attacking Protestant liberalism, Roman Catholicism, or fundamentalism, it is more accurate to understand that what he heard, in listening to the Word, challenged these partners in dialogue. Speaking another word of authority alongside the Word, their words threatened the existence of the church by denying Christ’s lordship and accepting another, surrogate authority. In each instance, the subtle denial of Christ’s lordship instituted an anthropocentrically-oriented one—that of the modern human individual, that of the human institutional church, and that of the Bible.27 His challenges to each of these voices clamoring for authority were not an end in themselves: they were Barth’s unceasing attempts to maintain the clarity of one voice in the church, namely, the voice of God.

By his strict adherence to the posture of listening, Barth escapes the anthropocentrism and idealism of both Macmurray and Zizioulas. Instead, he maintains a theologically scientific approach to the question of personhood by understanding reality to be based in God’s actuality. He desires no other authority—philosophical, psychological, ecclesial—than the one Word of God. It is his rejection of prior agendas so as to hear the Word of God rightly that allows him to resist, to a much greater degree, the invasion of other words alongside the Word.

27 Although the Bible is the witness to the revelation of God in Christ, conventional forms of emphasis on its authority do not evade the anthropocentric question because the Bible is subject to individual interpretations, which, in turn, are colored by various presuppositions and agendas. Barth’s respect for God’s written word is undeniable and by challenging fundamentalists for their reliance on it, he did not at all imply a disregard for its authority. Rather, he sought to point out that “it is these that bear witness of [Christ]” and, therefore, the written word must be interpreted in light of the living Word. In the process he meant to challenge them—not for their proper understanding of its authority—but for the subtle surrogate role that their individual interpretations took in their system. Pointing to the Bible, they seemed to forget that Jesus Christ is the personal revelation of God and in so doing, created a “faith” that was propositional in nature, rather than personal. Ultimately, faith was not in Christ, but in the ability to reason the nature of God and to formulate a code of moral ethics, apologetics, and doctrinal statements. Therefore, they were rationalists and this was the target of Barth’s critique.
But Barth is not without errors. First, he does not completely escape errors in his Trinitarian presuppositions. Emphasizing the unity of the Trinity prior to affirming the personhood of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he reflects a western legacy. Herein lies the most vulnerable part of his dialogue. Zizioulas' identification of Father, Son, and Spirit as unique persons is a coherent and invaluable contribution to our understanding of this mystery. By emphasizing the unity of God to the point of nearly dismissing the uniqueness, Barth is forced to use questionable (and often confusing) formulations and terms, such as “Seinsweise.”

Such an approach often has the inappropriate effect of depicting the Father as an important, but often silent, partner in the trinitarian economy, and describing the Spirit in impersonal terms referential to specific functions. One could counter that the Father is present in the Son; nevertheless, it may well be that Barth could have expended more effort in addressing the multi-faceted involvement of the Father in the world (beyond creating, sending, and receiving).

Second, Barth understates the mutuality of trinitarian communing existence. He asserts that the Father is such as the Father of the Son and the Son is such as the Son of the Father—in a dual polarity—and addresses the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. I believe this is an unsatisfactory treatment of the doctrine of perichoresis, whereby we understand that each mutually indwells the other two. While he does not affirm a hierarchy, neither does he manage to describe equal participation in the economy of the Trinity. Granted, it is not clear from scripture what such “equality” might look like and Barth has contributed enormously to our understanding that any one person of the Trinity reveals all three. However, his Christocentric focus should enhance not only our recognition of the one embrace of Father, Spirit, and Son, but should heighten our awareness of these as unique persons. Sadly, this is not always the case.

Third, regarding the issue of weak pneumatology, Barth died before he could write his intended fifth volume of the Church Dogmatics. This volume was to address the work of the Holy Spirit. Very likely, he would have clarified some of the unanswered questions posed by his previous writings and so it is unfair to criticize his lack in pneumatology too extensively. What is available, however, has the questionable characteristic of depicting the Holy Spirit somewhat impersonally. It appears that Barth regards the Spirit primarily to be a bond who holds the Father and Son together—an unfortunate stance which weakens his trinitarian formulations.


29 Which has been translated as “modes of being” and, consequently, is subject to misunderstanding.
Fourth, Barth inadequately avoids following his theological method at a key point for this study; articulating the meaning of the word "person". Customarily, Barth considers words of theological significance and shows how they are abused by his opponents, misinterpret the being of God, and lead to confusion. Then he articulates their meaning in light of the triune being of God in Christ. But at this crucial point, he opts to abandon the word "person" and then proceeds to introduce language which has led to confusion.30 Barth chose to evade rather than to critique. The prevailing individualistic usages of the term could have been evaluated and illustratively used to correct erroneous western notions. Thus, the term continues to be used inappropriately without his corrective. At a point where his method could have given concrete meaning to this important term, he has abdicated his task instead of providing clear articulation.

Fifth, Barth emphasizes Jesus' roles as prophet and king, diminishing his priestly role. This is significant in that the Old Testament role of the priest was to bring the many into communion with God through worship. But the primacy of this role was later neglected as the nation called for a king and as the prophets arose to correct unfaithful Israel. But the priesthood was central in maintaining relationship in response to the holy God, especially on the day of atonement. Thus, the High Priestly role is of supreme importance, especially in our discussion of personhood, in that through this person Israel (and with it all humanity) participates in the life of God. The people of God are taken beyond provisional representation into provisional participation. The fact that Barth used the language of the judge judged in our place (and also of verdicts and pardon) made the royal man appear forensically. The focus should have been on Jesus as our High Priest, who leads us to share in the life of God, which is the very ground of human personhood.31 This neglect also affects his understanding of baptism and the Lord's supper; both of which find meaning in light of Israel's worship and the continuing role of Jesus as our High Priest. Barth's emphasis on the kingly and prophetic roles consequently highlights the concept of the church (and the believer) as confessors32

30 Because it appears modalistic, "modes of being", in the English translation. (See Barth, CD 1.1, p. 355f.) But modalism refers to masks God supposedly wears which are external to God's being. Barth is referring to otherness intrinsic to the being of God.

31 J. B. Torrance related to me in a personal conversation that he had asked Marcus Barth about this neglect. Marcus told him that, after giving a series of lectures on Hebrews, he had mentioned this neglect of the priestly emphasis to his father and the senior Barth acknowledged the truth of the evaluation.

32 See the discussion in CD 4.1, pp. 758-79 on faith as acknowledgement, recognition, and confession. Would it not have been appropriate to include participation as a clear articulation of the act of our faith in which we share the life of the One who creates our faith?
and inadequately discusses the idea of being in Christ as our High Priest; that primary relationship which establishes and maintains our humanity.

Sixth, there is a difficulty in Barth’s articulation of the analogy of relations. The concept of analogy focuses one on linguistic correspondence. But for Barth, the point was that one relationship was intended to parallel another. Had Barth used a phrase like the “witness of relations”, which has an interpersonal sense without direct equivalence, he would have focused more clearly on the relations rather than how one articulates the relations. Alternatively, he could have spoken of the image or reflections of relations which would highlight correspondence but not confuse the relationship (as being identical) and not separate them (as being only indirectly related). However, Barth gave in to the reigning grammar of the day, speaking of the analogy of being, of faith, and of relations. Clear scientific theology should lead beyond confusion and let mystery remain where appropriate articulation is lacking. Possibly Barth should have implied that there is more mystery about personhood than he did. There is a certain dance of relations which cannot be finally articulated, but is a form of art. Barth’s love of Mozart and the themes articulated in his works point to an awareness that some things can only be communicated appropriately in a manner which reflects the personal mystery of being. This “analogy of mystery” or witness to the uniqueness of each relationship beyond categorization is an essential element of proper theology within the dynamic of reality.

Positively, Barth articulates an anthropology which logically progresses from the true person, Christ, and addresses the issues which relate to the phenomenon of the human. His dogged interest in actualities enables him to maintain a truly scientific dialogue with the problem of anthropology. He challenges speculative, human-based knowledge precisely because it opposes the authority of Christ by its arbitrary selectivity, and as such, is an inadequate, erroneous ground from which to understand freedom.

By freedom, Barth refers to a reality already granted in Christ in which no conditions exist for the human, or any human institution, to fulfill. It is actualized in Christ, who grants persons freedom whether they understand it or not. The spontaneous response of faith to Christ engenders a deeper experience of this freedom, but the fact is that God has granted us time and space and, through the Spirit, declares that God is already for us—in Christ—and exists as the context wherein fulfilled personhood (freedom) occurs. Therefore, freedom is never a potentiality: it is concrete actuality and Barth’s proposal is the most adequate understanding of the three. Speaking from the context of the personal actuality of Christ, Barth avoids the rationalism and idealism which entangle Macmurray and Zizioulas.

Perhaps a final criticism that should be made concerning Barth is that although
he intended his writings for the church, most people either cannot understand them or are intimidated by the sheer volume of material he wrote and relinquish the task of reading (and understanding) before they begin. He seemingly forgets his audience and becomes so absorbed in the all-consuming task of interpreting, that he writes long, tangled sentences which tend to obscure, rather than clarify, what he hears from the Word. Hence, many have not benefited from his advances. It must be noted, here, that this criticism applies most directly to languages and cultures other than his own, and that Barth’s identified focus was his own context. However, it is true that whereas his dialogue specifically addresses issues in his own culture, it also is intended for the catholic church and, therefore, falls short of its intention. He understood that what is necessary and valuable to any one member can, and should, also be used in service to all members of the body of Christ. Undeniably profound, he is, unfortunately, just as undeniably inaccessible to a large number of people and there are few translators who can interpret accurately his thoughts to the people who so desperately need to be “dis-illumined” so as to live in the actuality of Christ’s freedom.

8.3.3 Contributions of Barth’s Work

Addressing Barth’s contributions in the realm of anthropology is an overwhelming task—one which I am not able to undertake definitively or exhaustively here. Rather, I begin the dialogue so as to foster an interest in further exploration of his thought. First, it is significant that, of each of the three writers examined in this thesis, Barth’s thought functions consistently as a scientific study by virtue of its engagement with actualities, rather than with speculative potentialities. He is disinclined to reject those who use other approaches; rather he points out their weaknesses for the purpose of serving the whole church. It is his recognition that all human formulations are liable to error that motivates his challenges and which necessitates continual, critical self-examination. He did not perceive himself to be above this summons; rather, he engaged in the dialogue as one participant among many.

Second, because of this, he was able to critique natural theology and clearly describe the inherent weakness of phenomenological observations, which are subject to the presuppositions of their interpreter. The natural theologian credits these prior agendas with an authority equal to that of the Word and subsequent proposals are, at best, prejudiced perversions of truth. Herein lies the basis for an appropriate challenge to human or ecclesial capacities which supplement the Word, and in so doing, supplant it.

Therefore, third, his emphasis on revelation as the dynamic self-involvement of
God in history rejects the possibility of positivistic revelation or human speculation. Revelation, in this sense, is defined by God’s actuality in a historical event and hence, is the only appropriate launching point for a scientifically characterized study of God. Because of this actuality of God’s involvement in history, we are not required to speculate regarding the nature of God or of human persons. We are told who God is and who we are by God, who is God to us and for us.

Fourth, consequent to this encounter, we are not allowed the luxury of linguistic manipulation; we are given a proper ground for language as it is given meaning by God. Barth treads the path of language with propriety, taking care to allow terms to be impregnated with Christological content rather than bastardized by static, anthropocentric definitions which spawn illegitimate ideas into our understanding of personhood. This was the reason behind his hesitation to use the term “person” at all. He recognized the delicate position of using a term in a manner which differed from its already established association. However, he maintained that language, dynamic and powerful, can only be shaped legitimately by Christ if it is to be meaningful, precise, and accurate.

Finally, because of his Christocentric focus, Barth did not commit himself to a system of “freedom.” He could only speak of freedom from the context of that specific person who sets us free. Freedom cannot be described systematically, nor can it be conditioned: it is (always) the gift of God in dynamic encounter. Barth’s legacy to theological students is the difficult task of shedding propositional and doctrinal statements about God in order to listen to the living God. By listening, he does not imply that we approach an empty silence with the intent to speak into it and hear an answer. We do not rupture silence with our questions; rather, ours is the posture of hearing the active address of the Word. Hence, we cannot even claim the right to ask who this Word is, for the Word answers the who question before it has been asked. Indeed, the Word speaks and asks us if we know who we are. Furthermore, the Word initiates encounter and tells us who we are: we are sons and daughters of God. Humanity does not, for it cannot, approach God. It is God who has approached and transformed us, thereby enabling us to hear this Word who reveals to us who we are and how we have been made free.

8.4 Comparison of Macmurray, Zizioulas, and Barth

8.4.1 Similarities

Macmurray, Zizioulas, and Barth credit the abundant misunderstandings of personhood to philosophical presuppositions that are bred primarily by anthropocentric epistemologies. The result is a hybrid, individualistic concept of the person, based
on physical and psychological phenomena. Historically, theologians and philosophers alike have cast these empirically observed phenomena in a divine image for the purpose of validating various reductionistic and culturally informed systems of religion (including Christianity) or philosophy. Despite numerous attempts to construct a satisfactory, mutually agreeable paradigm for understanding personhood and its subsequent issues, the various processes have succeeded only in confusing the dialogue and creating the current crisis of conflicting, incoherent formulations of personhood. For this reason, Macmurray, Zizioulas, and Barth believe their task to be corrective in nature. Each challenges rationalistic ontologies which phenomenologically define personhood and propounds, instead, a personal existence which is prior to our formulations and must be understood as a dynamic interrelation with other persons.

All three regard God as the creator and sustainer of the universe and believe that God’s being is related to human personhood. All three also consider the Bible as significant in any dialogue regarding God. Furthermore, each is persuaded that God is the source of knowledge about personhood. Each understands the existence of God and humans as a dynamic “going out” of the person in interrelation with another person. Consequently, all three use similar slogans for defining personhood: Macmurray, persons in relation; Zizioulas, being in communion; Barth, being in encounter. However, they mean quite different things. Each believes freedom to be fulfilled personhood. But, as this thesis argues, each has such a distinct formulation of what constitutes personhood, that the form of the freedom is quite different.

8.4.2 Differences

General and Methodological Differences

Generally speaking, both Macmurray and Zizioulas have created speculative, idealistic systems. Paradoxically, Macmurray contradicts his desire to interact solely with actuality, placing in its stead his agenda of potential peace and, hence, presenting an inadequate, selective, phenomenological evaluation of personhood. Zizioulas, on the other hand, de-emphasizes here-and-now issues and focuses, instead, on the realm of the eschaton. The Eucharist’s sole function appears to be one of enabling humanity to shed its temporal, earth-bound existence so as to

33 Although neither Macmurray nor Zizioulas appear to conceive it as the essential element.
34 Barth alone perceives God as the only source.
35 See Anderson, BH, p. 5. Existence is ex-sistentia: that which stands out from itself; hence, to exist is to go out to another.
participate in the eternal existence of God. Consequently, he can neither begin nor conclude with actualities—indeed, he rejects such constraints—and relies on speculation to formulate his understandings of personhood. Barth alone succeeds in maintaining a truly scientific theology, pursuing the task from the context of actualities. Understanding reality to be based on the Creator's self-revelation, he explores the question in a manner appropriate to the object of its investigation and sustains an internally consistent, cohesive engagement with the problems of personhood and freedom.

Comparatively, Barth is more coherent in his formulations of personhood. His Christocentric focus in addressing the question of personhood disallows anthropocentric epistemologies, which tout human capacity. Fulfilled personhood, he proposes, can only be understood and experienced as a given actuality by God in Christ. It is because of his encountering, enabling presence with and for humanity that personhood exists at all. It is precisely in the act of encounter and self-revelation that personhood is fulfilled, engaging persons in the person of freedom.

Clearly, the problem of accurately defining freedom lies in the enormous impact of properly and improperly derived epistemologies. Seeking to interpret the universe, Macmurray pursues his epistemological task by observing the phenomenon of the universe with an *a priori*, selective agenda that has not been carefully examined for the presence of anthropocentric presuppositions. Without due caution, he explores the topic of fulfilled personhood within the limits of physical reality via observation of the material world. Natural theology is not only permissible in this system, it is surrogate in nature. Macmurray interprets the revelation of God and ignores Jesus' self-assertions, favoring, instead, substantiation from his natural theology and argues from the referential point of human existence and capacity. His interpretation of actualities, therefore, is colored by (anthropocentric) speculative potentialities.

Zizioulas' epistemological task is to interpret eternity. *Contra* Macmurray, he dispenses with the limits of the material world and engages, instead, with metaphysical reality. However, he does not do so from a Christocentric context (indeed, the historical significance of Christ lies primarily in his functional role of instituting the church). His focus on metaphysical reality, which cannot be linked in any manner to temporal or spatial phenomena, immediately catapults him into the realm of speculation.

---

36 In Christ, as Barth has observed, personhood and freedom have already been fulfilled and are presently experienced.

37 *BAC*, pp. 44–46.

38 As priests of creation, our role is also escapist in that we become the vehicle by which the created order escapes the present (temporal) world so as to partake of the (eternal) *eschaton*.
Zizioulas asserts that humans can know and experience the eternal existence of God through the intermediary presence of the church. The contingent element of his formulations is his rationally defined sense of church—which, he believes, must engage in right thinking if it is to experience metaphysical reality. Furthermore, he (somewhat arbitrarily) suggests that right thinking is conditioned by Orthodox presuppositions. Historically, the eastern Orthodox institution has neglected the concerns of earthly existence in favor of the metaphysical one and despite his intention to do otherwise, Zizioulas brings his Orthodoxy to bear on the question of personal existence. Whereas he may interpret eternity, he fails to interpret history (which he wants to escape) and, therefore, engages in dualistic, speculative idealism.

Barth's task is to listen to, and interpret, the Word. His subsequent affront to various anthropocentric epistemologies reflects the fact that what he hears challenges their assertions of accuracy. This is so because Barth's sole determinant of reality is the being of God in Christ and any other word which speaks incongruously alongside of the Word, he believes, must be challenged. His task is based—and continually focused—on the givenness of God. Therefore, in order to address issues of reality unreservedly, Barth confines himself to actuality and is, therefore, uniquely "scientific" according to what is argued to be "scientific" by Barth and T. F. Torrance. That is, his epistemological task is the only undertaking of the three which can be fulfilled coherently and simultaneously reflect reality.

The epistemology of each writer pervades his diagnoses of the problem of personhood and subsequent understandings of freedom. Macmurray proposes that modern conceptions of personhood are faulty because, historically, philosophers did not identify correctly the common denominator of persons and therefore failed to construct an accurate (phenomenological) definition. He posits their rationalistic focus as the mitigating factor which confused subsequent understandings. Had they credited action as the defining attribute of personhood, he believes, they would have answered definitively the problems that surround the topic.

Like Macmurray, Zizioulas believes that the problem of modern misconceptions of personhood results from an inappropriate common denominator. However, unlike Macmurray, he only briefly addresses the historic dialogue of philosophy and ultimately attributes the fault to theologians. According to Zizioulas, by choosing to define personal being by our substantial, biological nature rather than by ecclesial being, theologians have erred. He proposes that fulfilled personhood

---

39 *em Contra Macmurray and Zizioulas, he shuns the voice of speculation because it has no ground in reality.*
should be addressed within the context of metaphysical, rather than physical reality. His Orthodox presuppositions undermine notions of fulfillment, personal or otherwise, in the physical realm.

Barth believes that reality belongs to—and, therefore, is defined by—God. Therefore, the question of fulfilled personhood can be answered only by God in the person of Christ. Personhood, then, is not a category into which God fits. God is the context from which humanity's personhood and freedom can be addressed. Jesus Christ is the Person and, as such, he challenges anthropocentric epistemologies. The fault, then, lies not in choosing the wrong common denominator, but in choosing any at all. No common denominator can be extracted from phenomenological observations; no speculatively postulated potentialities can be proposed as the fulfillment of personhood. It is revealed in Christ who subsequently gifts humanity with its meaning and fulfillment.

Theological Differences

As indicated, all three affirm that God is crucial to human understanding of personal being, but what each implies by this premise differs vastly from the others. Whereas Zizioulas and Barth describe themselves as trinitarian, Macmurray is not explicitly such, though he does conceive of a personal God. He vacillates between a unified (singular) person and a being who is the conglomeration of all other persons and his God, generally derived from the Christian tradition, is vague and amorphous. It is possible to suggest that Macmurray's system (somewhat ambiguously) shadows an economic Trinity, but he does not reflect traditional understandings of trinitarian being and certainly does not address the immanent Trinity.

Zizioulas, on the other hand, is clearly trinitarian—almost to the detriment of God's unity. He emphasizes three persons in one being who exist in eternity as communion and although his discussion of the immanent Trinity is excellent, he does not accept that God can be adequately known through the economic work of the Trinity. Thus, he separates the act and being of God, raising the question as to how he actually does know God "as He is." This thread of dualism runs throughout the fabric of his system, dividing as it goes: east from west, scientific

---

40 See RE, p. 175 for his one allusion to the Trinity: "The formula of three persons in one God is sensible and significant when you put it side by side with the meaninglessness of the fundamental formula of scientific faith, that one and one makes two."

41 God "revealing" through Christ and creating community by the Spirit.

42 See also Gordon Watson, "The Filioque—Opportunity for Debate?" SJT 41 (1988): 330, who assesses such correspondence of the immanent Trinity with the economy of God to be a form of modalism. "We would contend that the attempt to read the economy back into God's ousia, however carefully the distinctions are maintained, must tend toward some form of modalism wherein either
theology from mysticism, ecclesial being from biological being, and historical reality from metaphysical reality.

Likewise, with respect to the phrase trinitarian existence, Barth is most vulnerable to misunderstanding. By trinitarian, he implies one personal being who is known in three modes of existence. Heavily emphasizing the unity of the Trinity, as we have noted, he brings his western concerns to the fore; however, he consistently maintains that the immanent God is known through the economy of the Trinity. This understanding of knowledge—derived from the immanent economy of God—distinguishes Barth as the superior theologian, establishing a coherent premise that genuinely allows humans to know God personally (or, more aptly, to be known by God). The basis of Barth’s scientific method is that God is known in God’s revelation in Christ. An excellent treatise on the subject is the defense by Jüngel, *God’s Being is in Becoming* (see especially p. 26).

Obviously, understandings of the term person significantly affect formulations of fulfilled personhood. As Barth has illustrated, this is especially true with respect to how one understands the person of Christ. Although Macmurray astutely diagnoses the problems of rationalism, he ironically enough conceives of Jesus as a person who discovers and teaches us about personhood and demonstrates how to act like a true person. Such a conception can only be described as rationalistic and morally based. The tragedy of rationalism is its futility: it cannot reflect reality accurately and hopes for personal fulfillment in human potential, perceiving completed personhood independently from Christ. Based on individual merit, humans can never realize fulfillment. Rather, they are constrained by their alienating anthropocentrism, which leads instead to the despair of unfulfillment.

Zizioulas’ Christology is vulnerable in that he depicts Christ as an eternal being who is the head of the church-body in such a way that he derives an institutional ecclesial constitution. Despite his desire to transcend the historical dimension, he degrades the godhead is divided or the creature is divinised.” Watson appears to reflect the mysticism of eastern theologians (Zizioulas included) by establishing an epistemology through worship. (Granted, he does so happily.) Although such a stance is certainly a commendable recognition of the significance of worship, by separating God’s act from God’s being, both Zizioulas and Watson understate the fact that we worship through Christ (as revealed in history!). Is not worship a participation in the being of God specifically enabled through our encounter with the prior act of God? I suggest that it might be better to follow the doxological theology of J. B. Torrance, who depicts our worship as a participation in Christ (who stands in our place and draws us into communion).

43The basis of Barth’s scientific method is that God is known in God’s revelation in Christ. An excellent treatise on the subject is the defense by Jüngel, *God’s Being is in Becoming* (see especially p. 26).

44Rather than to know teachings from God (Macmurray) or to be satisfied with an ecclesial mysticism (Zizioulas).

45Know what you were made to be and act accordingly and you will be a free person.
cannot quite make the quantum leap of shedding the human (physical) ecclesial being. He attempts to resolve the dilemma through mysticism: Christ is not known by observing the church body, but through the Eucharist. Because Christ is ontologically eternal, not historical, Zizioulas believes, his (and human) being is in ecclesial being—which is realized by escaping the biological and historical to participate in the eternal.

Here is the irony of paradox: it is precisely in the act of historical, physical participation in the ecclesial sharing of the Eucharist that Christ is constituted and ecclesial being is realized. The escape from biological being so as to experience metaphysical reality is contingent upon the ongoing actuality of continued biological being! Because fulfilled personhood is biologically contingent upon ecclesial participation in the Eucharist, Zizioulas places the capacity which enables us to escape biological existence and experience freedom in the church. Fulfillment is not conditioned by Christ, then, but by the human ecclesial institution.

Furthermore, his Christology is problematic in that it is “escapist”: it presupposes that Jesus was not fully free in his biological existence and, therefore, this sphere must be transcended if freedom is to be actualized. It appears that this assumption is linked to his eastern Orthodoxy, which yearns for release from its self-described bondage of biological existence. In this instance, Zizioulas projects onto Christ his own concerns instead of allowing his concerns to be determined by Christ. In view of both the problems of human contingency and escapism, his Christology appears to be somewhat speculative in nature and, consequently, so is his understanding of freedom.

Barth avoids idealism: Jesus is the actuality of God in humanity, whose being is the determinant of personhood and freedom. Barth observes that only God can initiate encounter and bridge the gulf between our differences and that God, in Christ, has done so. Because Jesus is the elect human and fully divine, he is the sole means for dialogue and encounter between God and humanity. As Barth contends, there is one knowledge of the person of God and juxtaposed attempts collapse into anthropomorphism. Positive knowledge of a transcendent divine being is in itself impossible outside of the self-revelation of that being. Christ is that revelation and he speaks as the Word of God in the divine encounter with humanity.

Detrimentally, Macmurray and Zizioulas not only permit, but rely on, a knowledge of God outside of Christ as witnessed to in the Bible. Macmurray’s consent to, and implementation of, natural theology mutes the voice of the Word. Although

---

46 It must be noted here that he has not always been cognizant of this fact. This assertion is the major dividing indicator between Barth’s earlier and later theological dialogues.
he does not deny revelation, he nevertheless compromises it and colors the truth with his subjective observations. The adjacent voice to which Zizioulas listens speaks in the language of the Eucharist. Despite his claims that it is the voice of the Logos, it is not grounded in the historical Christ and therefore ignores Christ's self-revelation in human history. His knowledge is derived from ecclesiologically based worship and thus is unable to extricate itself from its human presuppositions.

As each develops a different Christology, so the conception of the Spirit is distinctly different in each case. Macmurray depicts the Spirit as the spirit of community. He does not believe that the Holy Spirit is an essential, necessary source of the knowledge of God; therefore, his reliance on the Holy Spirit is replaced by human capacity, a *hominineque*. In this sense, his is a focus on the spirit of the religious person.47

Zizioulas advances beyond the human spirit of Macmurray's system, to embrace the Spirit of Christ; however, Christ's Spirit is conditioned by church institutions. He places the experience of knowledge in the context of Christ's Spirit, but only as enabled by a capacity of the church, an *ecclesioque*. This was Barth's criticism of Romanism.48 In such a system, the Spirit is confused too easily with the spirit of the church. It appears that the primary task of the Spirit in the ecclesial body is to empower its escape rather than to develop it,49 either corporately or individually.50

Barth regards the Spirit as the One who brings Christ to us (and us to Christ), enabling us to walk as the children of God and to grow and develop as persons in Christ. Therefore, the *filioque* is an essential recognition of the interrelated work of the Spirit uniquely with the Son. Again, it is important to remember that Barth's (inconvenient) demise prevented him from expending his energy on the intended, and much needed, task of further developing his pneumatology. What is available to us is gleaned from his completed works—which were not specifically intended to address definitively the issues surrounding pneumatology.

As each conceives Christology and pneumatology differently, so their formulations of God, the Father, are different. The Father is primarily a mysterious person for all three writers. Macmurray's use of the term Father portrays an essentially deist God: the Creator of the world—and he says little more on the subject.

48Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation*, p. 231.
49I wonder about the nature of this one who is to lead us into developing the various fruits (of the Spirit) in our lives.
50As a spelling error in a student's essay humorously portrayed, "... through the Spirit the Church is the 'rebeemed' community"—with the Spirit as the power behind the transport.
Zizioulas depicts the Father as the source of the Son and the Spirit, but the manner in which he does so challenges notions of equality among the persons and casts doubt on what he means by the term communion. Barth regards the Father as that One, known through the person of Christ, who elects the Son on behalf of humanity and sends the Spirit to bring humanity into personal communion in triune fellowship. Although this may appear similar to Zizioulas' causal model, he does not conceive of the Father as source and so escapes the hierarchy which Zizioulas proposes. The notions of all three, then, seem to be inadequate in portraying a distant Father.

**Ecclesiological Differences**

Because all three writers affirm a correspondence between God and the church which is instrumental in fulfilling personhood, it is appropriate to address their ecclesiology. (In Macmurray's case, the term religion is more accurate.) All three believed the church to be the community of free persons, but from this point of departure, each defines it uniquely. For Macmurray, it is the community of persons who have intentioned and acted in order to be friends. In this sense, it is not a specific ecclesial body, but the religious spirit of friendship which appears to constitute the church.

Zizioulas describes the church as the body of Christ, albeit inextricably bound up with the human institution. Appropriately, he describes the church as instituted by Christ and now constituted by the Spirit; however, the bishop, baptism, and the Eucharist are essential elements and appear to supplant the sufficiency of Christ. Here, the temporal essentially collapses into the eternal and becomes a confusing mixture of mysticism, speculation, and abstraction.

Barth bypasses human institutions (as to be expected) and describes, instead, participation in the life, death, and resurrection of the church's Lord. Avoiding a static concept, he believes the church is that dynamic encounter and participation in the person of Christ. Not devaluing the sacraments of the historical institution, he contends that they are part of the responsive life of faith, a participation in the completed work of Christ.

Due to Zizioulas' Eucharistic emphasis, it is suitable to note here one particular sacrament: communion. As with their formulations of the church, each of the three uses the term uniquely. Macmurray describes communion as any gathering of friends who share together. In this sense, communion celebrates friendship and need not be exclusively ecclesial or sacramental in nature.

For Zizioulas, communion is a mode of existence proper to God and, as such, is
truth. Experienced by humans through the Eucharist, it is a quality of the eschaton\textsuperscript{51} and appears to be chief among the sacraments—indeed, prior to the sacraments, according to Zizioulas. He replaces the hypostatic union of Christ, through which we know God, with the hypostatic union of the Eucharist and it is here that divine and human contingencies converge in his system.

Barth’s use of the term communion conveys personal encounter with Christ. Grounded in God’s revelation and enabled by the Spirit, it is the context in which one is addressed as a Thou by God.

**Eschatological Differences**

Believing that history’s purpose determines one’s present task, each writer’s perception of the telos of history throws its shadow on his formulations of present issues. I will use the terms eschatology, eschaton and Eschatos to delineate their positions. Macmurray describes history in terms of eschatology and seeks to understand the state of human relations when God’s intentions are fulfilled here on earth. The dream of the future which Macmurray hopes to facilitate is the fulfillment of God’s supposed intention of worldwide peace. This interpretation of God’s intention motivates him to challenge systems which deny the potential for peace by their destructive, alienating philosophies. He proposes, instead, a system which he believes will reverse the process by formulations which are congruent with this intention of peace.

His understanding of eschatology is that of an ideal state of fulfilled personhood and although he seeks to emphasize the dynamic quality of this fulfilled state, it remains, nevertheless, a state. Macmurray’s system can be likened to a blueprint for establishing Utopia. The Utopian nature of his eschatology is derived from human intention to cooperate with God’s alleged intention of peace. Note here, that Macmurray does not conceive of a God whose intention is fulfilled in the act of suffering with humanity; therefore, he believes fulfillment must occur as an end of suffering. Once again, his anthropocentric concerns, rather than the givenness of God’s actuality in Christ, define God’s intention (who suffers with and for humanity).

Zizioulas addresses the telos of history from the perspective of the eschaton (God’s way of being) and so advances beyond Macmurray’s humanly constructed notion. However, he seeks fulfillment by exchanging temporal, biological existence for another reality, repeating the theme of static fulfillment of God’s intention. It is pertinent, here, to explore the question of how Zizioulas acquires his knowledge

\textsuperscript{51}See *BAC*, pp. 93–101, on the idea of truth as communion.
of God and the eschaton. His system unfortunately echoes a tone of Gnosticism, which remains an unsettled issue throughout his discourse on the fulfillment of personhood in the eschaton.

Departing from the static understanding of fulfillment in eschatologically related issues, Barth speaks of the One who is the Eschatos. The personal inbreaking of God into human history determines and shapes personhood and freedom; therefore, Barth’s is a dynamic, rather than static, field of fulfilled history. He avoids not only the static formulations of Macmurray and Zizioulas, but also the Gnostic element of the latter and points directly to Christ, past and future, as the sole definer of eschatological concerns. It is appropriate to mention Jesus’ declaration of himself: I am the Alpha and the Omega. Identifying himself as the Alpha and the Omega, Christ is the inbreaking of past and future into the present, not as a static structure or system, but as a person.

Obviously, eschatological concerns pertain not only to future generations, but to the present as well: they address the future from the perspective of the present. The fulfillment of “the last things” concerns all peoples at all points of history. What one believes eschatologically directly affects one’s actions and attitudes. These responses to divine intention are commonly known in Christianity as faith—a matter which has been of utmost interest to each generation of those who call themselves believers, primarily because it is the human side of the divine-human dialogue.

Differences in Understanding Faith

Macmurray conceives faith as alignment with reality (including God) and valuing that which is credible and brings joy to our lives. In his understanding, we own our faith by reflecting reality in our thought. His emphasis on real thinking can be taken for what it is: rationality. It is a scientific attitude which, he believes, has its genesis in the teachings of Jesus and motivates a person to participate in activities that reflect the original community of faith. The scientific attitude aligns with Macmurray’s rational presuppositions and sets the context for his understanding of faith. However, he avoids completely basing his conception of faith in pure reason by insisting that real thinking must engage with the world. The truly religious person not only reflects reality in his/her thoughts, but is fully involved with the world and other persons.

Although an excellent treatise on the dynamic nature of faith, McMurray’s

52 Bolich, Karl Barth and Evangelicalism, p. 113.
53 FMW, pp. 24–27.
work is fundamentally anthropocentrism. Emphasizing faith as fulfillment of human intention\textsuperscript{54} in correspondence to God's intention, he locates humanity as the context from which faith springs, rather than God.

Turning from Macmurray's anthropological ground of faith, I address Zizioulas' notion of ecclesial worship as the human faith response to God. Because he does not emphasize the term faith, it is difficult to describe explicitly Zizioulas' beliefs about it. However, it appears to be a rationally based access to the mystical realm of the eschaton. Although he dismisses the validity of rationalism, his concern is apparently with individualistic rationalism, rather than with rationalism itself. Replacing the individual with the ecclesial body in the formula, he engages in what appears to be ecclesial rationalism. In order to participate in the ecclesial escape from biological existence, the church-body must believe in the capacity of the Eucharist and in the reality of the communal ontology of the eschaton. Individuals share in this reality by sharing the collective belief of the ecclesial body. Faith, therefore, remains based on reason. It is imperative to note here that Zizioulas clearly emphasizes the immediate importance of the Holy Spirit so that what potentially might amount to sharing in the eschaton through agreement with the beliefs of the institutional church is balanced by the present activity of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic event.\textsuperscript{55}

Another concern in Zizioulas' understanding of the response of faith through Eucharistic participation is his focus on a form of self-initiated departure from egocentrism. The goal of other-centeredness is an admirable one, reflective of Christ's command to love one another, but it is the means of achieving the goal which is problematic. According to Zizioulas, asceticism is the answer to the destructive egocentrism which alienates members of the body from one another. By asceticism, he does not suggest isolation or ethical legislation: he means the communal ethos which nourishes that desire to fulfill one's relational ontology in other-centeredness. Here, asceticism appears to be a rather healthy summons to personal interrelation, and as such is not the problematic element of the dialogue. It is the self-initiated characteristic that unravels the fabric of the faith-response because it is distinctly anthropocentric in nature. It is on the basis of human capacity to be aware of such a need and to initiate the process of departure from self-centeredness that Zizioulas explores the notion of spiritual asceticism.

He attempts to extricate himself from the basis of human capacity by entering

\textsuperscript{54}We intend to know the world through our acting.

\textsuperscript{55}It is a balance delicately achieved and one which I wish were a little less precarious. The heavy accent on a mutually agreed formulation of faith can easily tempt one to tip the scales toward ecclesial rationalism.
into a discourse on the longing to be fulfilled in Eucharistic encounter. In this context, he describes the nature of that longing as God-given, but left to the human to fulfill. Is this longing, or capacity for it, contingent upon God or upon the human? It remains unclear what Zizioulas believes to be the case and so retains the flavor of anthropocentrism and, therefore, unsatisfactorily addresses the issue of faith-fulfillment in Christ.

Overlooking faith-fulfillment in the historical person of Christ, Zizioulas limits his discourse to Christ’s presence in ecclesial activity and does not address the issue of human response outside of this body. While it is presumptuous to assert that he has no place for faith-participation outside of the human institution of the church, it is fair to say that he believes it occurs within that context. It remains to be seen how this perspective engages with any of the multitude of exceptions to the norm. Still, the theme of human contingency remains a problematic element. Faith-response is conditioned directly by the ecclesial body who gathers, in collective belief, to share in the Eucharistic event.

Barth dismisses notions of contingency and speaks once more of actualities. Faith is not a potential to be realized: it is grounded in the actuality of Christ. He describes first the faithfulness of Christ in obedient response to the Father and, subsequently, faith as the human, Spirit-enabled response to Christ who encounters us. He asks, “What is *sola fidei* but a weak, but necessary echo of the *solus Christus*?” Thus, the faithfulness of Christ is the ground of human personhood and freedom which leads to a personal response. Ours is no self-manufactured relationship toward God. We participate in the life in Christ within the time and space provided for our dependent existence.

It appears that Barth is the only champion of unconditionality—specifically, the unconditional faithfulness of Christ. Macmurray believes that although the fall has ruptured relationships, it has not affected the human ability to respond to God. He remains committed to conditionality in the form of the human capacity for orthopraxy, whereas Zizioulas claims to let go of conditionality and capacity. Careful examination, however, reveals that he has not released his hold on these.

56 For instance, how would Zizioulas describe Eucharistic participation in the circumstance of the unbaptized infant, the mentally retarded person (who cannot comprehend these collective beliefs let alone share them), or the believer who lives in isolation from other believers? It is appropriate to note at this point in the dialogue, that Zizioulas’ understanding of the believers as priests of all creation may be applicable here and that these “exceptions” may participate through the participation of the ecclesial body on their behalf. The phrase vicarious participation comes to mind, but Zizioulas is not keen on this word because he regards it as “western.” Hence, it is difficult to know exactly what he intends by this participation-on-the-behalf-of, if it is not a vicarious act.

57 *CD* 4.1, p. 632.
capacities entirely. Contending that our capacity for God is in our incapacity as humans, he puts capacity in the hands of the church. Its capacity to reverse the effects of the fall and to reconcile humans to God relies very little on the historical passion of Christ. Although it owes its genesis to this historical passion, the church does not appear to rely on its ongoing capacity to bring humans into Eucharistic participation in the eschaton. Furthermore, he appears to direct our thoughts to a capacity for orthodoxy whereby we know what is true about God and can form theology which will unify the church. Had he thoroughly examined the notion of incapacity, he would have recognized that church unity is located in the already completed work of Christ precisely in answer to human incapacity and that not even one incapacity can resolve the need merely by causing us to long for fulfillment. Unfortunately, he has not; consequently, he places too much confidence in the ability of the church.

The crucial methodological issue here is whether one begins with a presupposition-laden, anthropologically defined system or humbly, as an exercise of faith seeking understanding, with the revelation of the person of God, who unifies temporal reality—past, present, and future—and eternity, mind and matter. Whereas Barth understands God to be central to the question of personhood, Macmurray creates a system in which personhood is defined by the human. Granted, Macmurray's system allows that God creates the context in which humans can experience freedom, but ultimately God and humanity are separate (distinct) aspects of reality. As such, humanity's potential to experience freedom is grounded in its own capacity. Likewise, Zizioulas' system exchanges human capacity for the church. It is now ecclesial capacity which constitutes persons, albeit by the divine involvement of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, his is a more dynamic system in which God is actively involved, but the contingency of human activity necessitates the conclusion that personhood is reliant on two forces: ecclesial being and divine being. The confusion enters in his paradoxical understanding of ecclesial being which refers to both human and divine, institutional and mystical, being. He collapses the two, thereby deferring the contingency of human activity. It is in the sphere of these two contingencies that he believes persons come to fulfillment and experience freedom.

Anthropological Differences

Questions of human capacity (and incapacity) lead each writer to explore the nature of the fall and its effects on humanity; more specifically, its effect on true personhood. As already noted, Macmurray's conception of the fall leaves room for human capacity to slip past its effect still intact. It also allows that human powers of observation remain as keen as ever—after all, it is this firm belief which allows
him to base his entire epistemology on empirical observations. Likewise, when it comes to identifying personhood, Macmurray relies on these powers of perception to aid him in the quest for a proper formulation. In this pursuit, he observes the general, natural development of humans and concludes that those who act out of the love motive and consequently achieve friendship are true persons. Why? Because they have fulfilled the capacity for which they were made.

Although his conclusion is commendable, there is little doubt that his conception of intention is not derived from the personal being of God in Christ. Rather, as previously noted, his presuppositional concerns for peace in the context of his personal involvement with war determine what God's intention is. Macmurray has projected onto God his concern for global peace in the form of absence of war. From this premise, he concludes that true personhood must be linked to this intention for peace. If peace is the intention of God, then peace-loving humans who fulfill this intention through friendship must be true persons. Thus, according to Macmurray, heterocentricity is the means by which humans are fully personal.

Zizioulas answers the question of the fall and its effects on true personhood in the form of a query as to whether what we observe and experience accurately reflect what humanity is. He does not formulate a doctrine of the fall as such, but he notes that there is "something which can be called sin" and depicts it as a perversion of human capacity whereby, through introversion, humanity experiences distance between itself and the Creator. This distortion of creaturely capacity is not merely the accidental by-product of a tragic event: it is the choice to sacrifice personhood for thinghood through the individualization of existence. Clearly, he links personhood with a non-individualistic existence.

Exploring the issue of personhood in light of the fall, he asserts that it directly challenges our very being as persons in communion. So, personhood is fulfilled in communion. A true person, then, is one who experiences true communion. It behooves us to ask how he knows this is so. He does not tell us. He assumes it—or perhaps it is more accurate to say he supposes it from his tradition. Here, as with Macmurray, presuppositions have determined the intention of God. This time, God's intention is communion.

It does reflect personal being in relation and is, therefore, congruent with a Christocentrically shaped understanding. But his means of knowing God is questionable. He suggests little reliance on the revelational nature of the historical incarnation.

While the biblical evidence is strong that our communion with the Godhead and with one another should be complete (1 John 1), there it is a communion extremely concerned

251
Fulfillment of God’s intention—and hence of true personhood—is in communio in the ecclesial community. Narrowing the field of true personhood to that of the ecclesial body, Zizioulas fails to satisfy the questions of how one should understand those outside of this sphere. Are they not “true” persons or are they sub-persons? Because he does not address this question I will focus attention on the question he chooses to address: primarily, personhood within the ecclesial community.

Fulfillment of God’s intention of communion, and thus of personhood, lies in the ecclesial capacity to participate collectively in the Eucharist. Despite Zizioulas’ claim that Christ is the human person par excellence, his prime example of a relational being is the bishop, the human head of the church. From this, might we assume that he is the truest person of the community? Although this head has already accomplished personhood through ecclesial involvement as a communitant, it is in the actual process of presiding as bishop over the ecclesial community that personhood par excellence is gained. Whatever the case, it is clear, from Zizioulas’ formulations, that one must become ecclesiocentric to be a fulfilled person.

Note that the church’s mission is to bring others to share in this fulfillment. It is able to do so precisely because of an inherent longing for communion—which apparently escaped the fall unscathed or alternatively, it exists because of the fall: it is a longing for presence with and in Christ that is generated by absence. This longing, though distinct from Macmurray’s concept of the human intention to fulfill peace in friendship, closely resembles the friendship-communion parallel and the capacity (or longing) for it. Zizioulas and Macmurray have more in common than perhaps first impressions would convey. Unfortunately, what is shared between them is a persistent adherence to human capacities and presuppositions which determine the intention of God.

Barth just as stubbornly adheres to a Christocentric focus. As with all other terms, he believes that personhood—fulfilled or otherwise—must be Christologically defined. Regarding our formulations of the term person, it is vital that we understand that there is one true person: Christ. Humans have their (subsequent) being in this One person; therefore, in this One, fulfilled personhood is actualized.

with loving one another in the historical context in a way not reflected by Zizioulas.

Apparenty so, for the rest of the community members rely on their participation in the community (especially in the Eucharist) to establish personhood whereas this one is established already in personhood and qualifies for the role of bishop. Incidentally, in order to qualify as an ecclesial community, a church must have a bishop as its head.

Seemingly, there exist true persons and really true persons.

CD 4.2, p. 452. “In the man Jesus we have to do with the true and normal form of human nature,
It is all very well to speak of actualities in Christ, but how are we to understand the human experience of personhood? Barth describes the human experience of personhood as that response which results from hearing the Word's address in encounter. He understands "being in encounter" to mean that the specific person, Jesus Christ, addresses all of humanity as Thou and summons all of humanity to himself in openness, dialogue, and shared assistance. In this address from the original I of the Tri-unity, known in Christ, personhood is bestowed. Bestowment, rather than achievement, is the vital element of personhood. Response does not create personhood: it is God's encounter with humanity, in Christ, which has actualized this for all human beings. Therefore, personhood is an accomplished fact in Christ and human response is a subsequent participation in the givenness of Christ's personhood.Persons realize fulfillment of true personhood in their participation, but they cannot establish it—either prior to or after the act of response. It has been actualized in Christ and participation is just that: participation.

Barth always addresses personhood in Christ and consequently does not formulate his conception of the effects of the fall on personhood from a categorical understanding of personhood. That is to say, he does not conceive a category, personhood, to which humans belong and which then became tainted. Because the only true human person is the Son of God, humanity is defined by him. From this premise, the effects of the fall can now be explored. For Barth, the fall is not simply an unfortunate event which rather sadly effected personhood. To understand it as such is to neglect serious engagement with reality—something Barth is not prepared to do. He explores the fall and its consequences with utter gravity.

The fall ruptured correspondence with God, eradicating human knowledge of God and annihilating the intimacy of interrelation. The disastrous consequence is that humanity exchanged personal being for nonpersonal being. Furthermore, humanity has no capacity to initiate encounter with God so as to reconstitute personal being through correspondence with God. Without capacity to engage in interrelation or to know God, the fall has effected humanity not only partially, but absolutely. It has abandoned humanity to nonpersonal existence. However, therefore authentic human life."
God did not abandon (and never has abandoned) humanity to its plight. God, in Christ, has bestowed personhood on humanity through personal encounter. Correspondence is actualized in Christ and so humanity is reconstituted in the being of God.

The corrective to our alienation and inability to know God is, once again, the person of Christ. He is the fulfillment of personhood, the encounter of God, and the address which aligns humanity with the reality of correspondence to God. Humanity does not choose its "being of correspondence," God has come to us in Christ and reconstituted our being in correspondence.

It should be obvious now that the axiom "relational constitution of personhood," does not imply synonymity among the three writers. Macmurray’s conception of "persons in relation" is realizing that capacity for which we were created through a shared life of experience. Personhood is consummated in the act(s) of fulfilling God’s intention of peace. For Zizioulas, “being as communion” means that God (the Father) exists ek-statically (not perichoretically) through his loving movement in the Son and Spirit.68 Son and Spirit furnish humanity with life and love through being related to the Father who is the source of love-communion. They lift humans to share the life of God. Thus, communion, and hence personhood, is participation through the ecclesial community to share the eternal life of God. Barth’s notion of “being in encounter” is Christologically determined and fulfilled. Human capacity, sharing eternity through the church, and being encountered by Christ are distinct in presupposition, development, and conclusion.69 Just as their axioms of personhood are not synonymous, so fulfillment in personhood is distinctly different for each writer. It will be remembered that fulfillment in personhood is what each of the three considers to be true freedom.

Philosophical Differences

I suggest that Barth’s theology is superior to that of the other two, both in source and in coherence. For this reason, his formulations provide the basis for a comparative philosophical analysis of the three thinker’s concept of freedom. George Hunsinger’s book, How to Read Karl Barth, proposes six philosophical terms which

68 BAC, p. 41.

69 Using Descartes’ existential anthropological formula as a model, we might propose that Macmurray states "I relate therefore I am." In this paradigm, human action initiates personhood. Zizioulas might say "I am in the ecclesial community, therefore I am." Here, the community’s capacities, in which I partake, enable personhood. Barth might say, “Christ is for me, therefore I am." Here, he ascribes the work of establishing and fulfilling personhood to Christ. It is not coincidental that Macmurray’s and Zizioulas’ axioms begin with I, whereas Barth’s begins with Christ. Humans with capacities versus concrete actualities in Christ are the focal points of departure.

254
characterize the theology of Barth. These prove most helpful in pursuing the task of comparison and contrast.

First, he states that Barth works with an actualism. By such, he implies that his theology is active in nature: truth is based on event and the dynamic nature of God’s relation to humanity. 70

Macmurray’s entire system is conditioned by his dynamic empiricism. Truth is defined from the experience of the human observer. Admittedly, observation is an active process, but the fact that Macmurray observes the state of human existence and creates a system by which one can understand the notion of personhood is not insignificant.

Zizioulas engages in mysticism. Truth is conceived as transcended history, through worship, and is for the purpose of sharing in eternity. Truth is communion, sharing in the eschaton.

Empiricism and mysticism are static in that they are fixed systems of thought ("isms"). Systems are subject to formulation and are static; persons are not: they are dynamic. 71 The term “actualism” is not Barth’s, nor is it a system in which he explored the issues of personhood. It is Hunsinger’s attempt to describe concisely Barth’s approach to epistemology and to theological dialogue.

Hunsinger further describes Barth’s work as based on particularism. All epistemic concerns are addressed in the very specific, particular, person of Christ. 72

Macmurray’s empirical system appears to derive from a categorical understanding of persons. He defines a category of personhood rooted in observation. It can, therefore, be described as a system based on categorical generalism.

Zizioulas, on the other hand, tends towards ecclesialism. Reality is known through the activities of the church. He views reality with the eyes of worship, it is true, and in so doing is involved in a dynamic process of gaining knowledge; however, it is not the worshipping which is the knowing, but the reality of the eschaton which is the focus—as is the activity of the ecclesial body in bringing persons to participate in this reality. Therefore, Zizioulas’ work is based on ecclesialism rather than the particularity of the person of Christ.

Third, Barth’s thought is a form of objectivism. He believes that God is objectively known in revelation; therefore, if knowledge is collapsed into human subjectivity it is no longer true knowledge. Truth is mediated through Christ. 73

71 It is appropriate to note that Barth’s Christocentric focus is not Christocism: rather, it is engagement with the person of Christ, who defines all terms.
72 Hunsinger, How to Read Karl Barth, pp. 32–35.
73 Hunsinger, How to Read Karl Barth, pp. 35–39.
It has been illustrated repeatedly that this is not the case for either Macmurray or Zizioulas. Each derives knowledge from a subjective base.

Macmurray’s system reflects a form of existential instrumentalism. He believes in an independent end to which our knowledge of existence is a means. His is a very pragmatic approach: he does not seek to know the object of study in and of itself, but for the purpose of substantiating his own agenda.74

Zizioulas, on the other hand, may be characterized as advocating a sacramental instrumentalism. Humanity can know God through the instrument of the sacraments and thereby achieve its end of fulfilled personhood. It could be argued that there is an underlying pragmatism here. 75 He seeks to know the means to the end—which, in his mind, is escape from biological existence. This escape is perceived primarily as salvation and fulfilled personhood—both of which are achieved through the church’s administration of the sacraments (especially the Eucharist). 76

According to Hunsinger, Barth builds a form of personalism. True knowledge comes through personal encounter. It is not a transmission of fact; rather, it is involvement in the I-Thou relationship. In this schema, knowledge is personal interrelation, acquired through the dynamic interaction77 of the personal encounter of Christ. Thus, he relies on a person rather than a system.

It may be said that Macmurray’s focus on personal relation as the fulfillment of personhood is personalist in nature, but his source of knowledge is the human and, therefore, his observations result in natural theology. His is a phenomenological personalism whereby knowledge is deduced from observation.

Zizioulas also echoes a form of personalism by his insistence on being as communion, but his source of knowledge is through involvement with the institution of the church and its participation in the eschaton. Hence, his is an ecclesially conditioned personalism and it is questionable whether it is really personalism as such or indeed, a form of institutionalism.

Fifth, Hunsinger uses the term “realism” to describe Barth’s use of theological language. Barth asserts that, based on biblical scripture, language is analogical and conveys its subject matter with certainty. Admittedly, the incapacity of human language to refer to God presents a barrier to constructing proper understandings of God; however, God has spoken to humanity in an address which is self-revealing. Though preserving God’s mystery, language allows for the genuine occurrence of

---

74 Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, pp. 143–47.
75 In this regard, he reflects Macmurray’s practical approach.
76 Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, p. 143.
77 All knowledge comes from God to us. Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*, pp. 40–42.
address from God to the whole person.\footnote{Hunsinger, \textit{How to Read Karl Barth}, pp. 43–49.}

Macmurray’s language resembles a form of literalism in that he limits his use of language to things which are literally observable. In so doing, he denies the possibility of knowledge (and, simultaneously, language description) of that which cannot be observed empirically.\footnote{Hunsinger, \textit{How to Read Karl Barth}, pp. 43–44.} Macmurray does not suggest that biblical scripture is an address by God; rather, he uses it in a literalistic, proof-texting manner, revealing his perception that it is a collection of (somewhat impersonal) writings.

Zizioulas’ use of language is a form of expressivism in which his conceptions of personhood, reality, and fulfillment find expression in figurative language. Because he is concerned with mystical reality, he is forced to articulate non-cognitive experiences in a figurative fashion,\footnote{Hunsinger, \textit{How to Read Karl Barth}, pp. 44–45.} often vaguely describing issues of concrete reality and leaving the reader to wonder what his beliefs are precisely.

Finally, Hunsinger unfortunately chooses to identify Barth’s work as a form of rationalism. Rather than a human-conceived dogma, Barth’s work is reasonable within the limits of revelation—with the emphasis on revelation and subsequently on reasonableness. Rationalism, in this sense, is a human understanding based on faith.\footnote{Hunsinger, \textit{How to Read Karl Barth}, p. 49. There is no knowledge without faith and no faith without knowledge.}

Macmurray has reversed Kant’s order of practical and pure reason, but his primary focus is still on human capacity to locate truth through the process of reason. Thus, he believes human reason to be the ground of knowledge of the world and neglects to submit his rationale to God for its definition.

Zizioulas may also be seen to be rationalistic to the extent that he credits human reason with the ability to know and depict the being of God. As such, knowledge is reliant on human capacity. It must be conceded that he clearly affirms relationally based knowledge and would like to derive knowledge in dynamic relation; however, he does not manage to do so. With respect to his urgent concern for eastern and western reconciliation, he locates the genesis of unity in mutual rational formulations. Regarding the nature of ecclesial fulfillment of personhood, his knowledge is mystical and has the distinctive pungency of Gnosticism.\footnote{As previously noted, he does not explain how he knows: he simply states what he believes to be true. This singular disregard for carefully substantiating his claims gives one the uncomfortable sensation that knowledge is, after all, a matter of opinion and that knowing God is simply the subjectively interpreted experience of the being of God in the Eucharistic event.}
This brief comparison provides a summary of how each person operates with respect to the issue of personal being. From this basis, then, I can address the issue of fulfilled personhood (freedom). Here, as before, the three have distinct understandings of freedom, directly corresponding to their unique understandings of personhood.

**Freedom**

The field in which Macmurray believes freedom is personally expressed is the human future. Because human intention is not consummated until it is acted, it is potential and potentialities belong to the future. Fulfillment of God’s intention of peace is the experience of friendship and is conditioned by human intention to act so as to experience that fulfillment. Therefore, his is a field of possibility which may or may not be realized. The reality is entirely dependent upon human intention to cooperate with God’s intention. So, his is an anthropocentrically determined freedom. Furthermore, because he bases freedom in the field of the future, it is possibility rather than an actuality and, thus, it is idealistic.

Zizioulas also believes freedom occurs in a personal field, but his is the field of the divine *eschaton*. This is where ecclesial participants know the truth as communion and are fulfilled persons (free) in this communing experience. As noted elsewhere, Zizioulas does not definitively answer the question of what exactly is meant by a divine communing experience and so I can describe it only as a mystical, idealistic form of freedom.

Barth understands freedom to be the person of Christ. He does not seek to locate freedom in a field as such, but in the person. Because Christ is the truly free person, who has gifted us with personal being, freedom is that reality in which persons live, encountered and fulfilled in God’s address. Personal response to this actuality in Christ is constituted by Spirit-enabled obedience. Freedom is realized through obedience—a notion rather foreign to anthropocentric definitions.

Provided by the sufficiency of Christ, this actual, unconditional freedom leads Barth to the notion that it is only in obedient response to Christ that human persons experience fulfillment. By fully participating in the personhood of Christ (which is fully obedient to the Father), persons are fully free. Immediately, one remembers the vast multitudes of persons who are not participating actively in the obedience of Christ. However, by entering into the realm of observation (remembering based on past observations), one repeats the errors of both Macmurray and Zizioulas, who observe the world and define freedom based on these observations. Such definitions derive from a biased human agenda because the observation process is subject to the biases and presuppositions of the observer. If we judge the world to
be unfree, based on our subjective interpretation of the empirically observed facts, we deny the completed work of Christ and the actuality of freedom in Christ.

If freedom is not understood to be actual in Christ, then we are not engaging with real freedom. Seeking any surrogate conception of freedom other than that which is actual in Christ, is only to further ensconce oneself in unfreedom (sin and rebellion against the actual freedom of Christ). Absolute human autonomy is not freedom: it is the self-destructive annihilation of freedom.

8.5 A Proposed Synthesis

Whereas Macmurray and Zizioulas can conceive of freedom only as a possibility, Barth asserts that it is actual. The conditioned freedom of Macmurray and Zizioulas derives from the intention and sufficiency of the human. If this is so, it is an impossible quest. Beginning from the field of possibility, both engage in conditional, anthropocentric formulations: if a particular condition is fulfilled, then freedom can occur. Furthermore, most systems emphasize the condition as individually determined. In light of the conflict of individual interests which necessarily excludes the experience of freedom sans confusion or chaos, one must ask whether such a thing is possible, let alone probable.

Left with the legacy of either Zizioulas' or Macmurray's systems, the church must speculate on this possibility called freedom. Conjectures as to how to achieve it can fluctuate as wildly as the individuals proposing them. The degree of instability and confusion which such paradigms create is merely the byproduct of such conjecture and these ought to be recognized for what they are: systems derived from speculation, which have little basis in reality. Of themselves, they do not offer a final solution to the question of what is freedom and so neither Macmurray nor Zizioulas can fulfill their agendas or bring true freedom.

However, while their systems cannot resolve the question of fulfilled personhood because they are not based in the actuality of Christ, each has contributed enormously to the dialogue. Both Macmurray and Zizioulas have done theologians and non-theologians alike a great service in their attempts to offer a coherent understanding of personhood. Although they base their systems on a misplaced confidence in human capacity, they render valuable aid in the process of challenging traditional understandings, and engaging seriously with the dynamic nature of personhood. For this reason, we cannot dismiss their thoughts and formulations without a thorough examination of the challenges they present to our own understanding.

As Macmurray so succinctly observed, we must be disillusioned from our
illusions of reality. A vital part of this disillusioning process is to recognize that there is no such thing as human capacity, either for freedom or for self-initiated encounter with God. Whether this capacity takes the form of individual capacity or institutional capacity is irrelevant. Neither individual nor institutional capacity can constitute personhood or fulfill it; hence, neither leads to freedom, the fulfillment of personhood. Both Macmurray and Zizioulas have offered valuable critiques of rationalistic, western forms of the person which undermine freedom and perpetrate chaos. But Barth reminds us that fulfilled personhood is never apart from Christ: he is the one truly fulfilled person in whom all others have their being.

This is not to devalue the individual and the church institution. On the contrary, they are vital creations of God, made to be in correspondence with the ground of reality. Each person is made to experience this correspondence of being in relation with God and thus, all fulfilled persons have a mission of proclamation. More accurately, the church shares God's mission of proclaiming the Word who has already set humanity free. This mission is continually in process, even as people deny it. To this end, all three writers seek to share in God's mission of bringing persons to fulfillment. Each recognizes, in his own way, the relational nature of personhood and each seeks to articulate, to the best of his ability, the nature of its constitution and fulfillment. With this motivation in mind, this study has engaged with the formulations of each writer in light of the others. Believing the body of Christ to be one of mutually interdependent members whose task of articulating reality is likewise dependent on engagement with others who have done the same, this thesis gleans the contributions made by each and points, with Barth (and John the Baptist), to the sufficiency of Christ. He is the ground of freedom.

In this study, I have shown that all three thinkers propose a theory of understanding personhood in terms of what we have called a "relational ontology." Barth and Macmurray succeed in maintaining an internal coherence in their descriptions whereas Zizioulas did not. Internal consistency is not synonymous with truth, but it does lend some credibility to the examination process. Despite his very commendable intentions, Zizioulas fails to sustain coherence due to his division of time and eternity. Additionally, he presents conflicting forms of trinitarian existence in each realm and describes freedom as an escape from time to eternity—all the while affirming the value of the church.

Zizioulas has, however, provided us with a valuable depiction of the Trinity as existing as communion. He convincingly argues that communion is an ontological necessity of personhood. His conception of the eternal Trinity affirms the

---

83 Barth admired a painting by Grünewald which depicted John the Baptist pointing to Christ. He displayed it above his desk as a reminder of his task as a theologian: to point to Christ.
personhood of Father, Son, and Spirit, and does not apologize for the uniqueness of each while simultaneously affirming absolutely the unity constituted by the three. As such, his is the superior articulation of the communing Trinity because it fully affirms the particularity of the divine persons and the specificity of their existence without collapsing into modalism. His clarity in describing the one being of God constituted as three persons significantly contributes to the dialogue and must not be overlooked.

In terms of corresponding with reality, Barth alone proposes a theology which is not based selectively on a prior agenda. Both Macmurray and Zizioulas, though admirable in their intent, supplant Christ with the goal of their task. Barth's approach to epistemology, focusing on the actuality of Christ, facilitates a consistently scientific work by which we understand what it means to know God personally more clearly than we do by relying on either Zizioulas or Macmurray. He affirms the value of the Bible in the Church and, in so doing, he properly conceives its role to be one of witnessing to Christ, the one true, free person.

Because the freedom of the Trinity gifted to humanity is the only actual freedom of this comparison, it is the only adequate freedom. Its genesis is not in idealism, but in reality. The temptation to conceive the empirical world as the ground of reality is strong. It is difficult not to succumb to relying on our perception of the phenomenon of human existence, and Barth's refusal to do so is exemplary. It is precisely due to his resistance to this temptation that he grounds human understanding of personhood in Christ and provides the critical controls for this study.

His resistance to phenomenologically-derived formulations, however, does not undermine the value of observation. Macmurray's studies of mother and child, personal and impersonal relationships, societies and communities, contribute substantially to an understanding of the relational nature of human persons. It is also noteworthy that Macmurray is, by far, the easiest writer to comprehend. Although he addresses philosophical issues which are necessarily obscure, he provides useful illustrations and valuable distinctions in commonly used terminology to describe personal existence. Furthermore, his pragmatism commendably lends to the study of the relational ontology of personhood.

All three writers relieve us of the burden of asking impossible questions, particularly with reference to the substance which constitutes personhood. Having

84 The tasks of building a unified humanity and re-establishing a unified church were subjectively rather than Christologically defined and thus, their "idols must totter," like those Barth had confronted before. See Jüngel, Karl Barth: Theological Legacy, p. 60.

85 By which I imply, "appropriate to the subject of study."
convincingly contended that personhood is constituted relationally, all three urge us to address personal subsistence rather than substance. It is no small difference. Indeed, it is significant enough to note that terminology is not simply a "matter of semantics"—as though that implied insignificance. It is imperative that we find appropriate ways to distinguish and evaluate the terms which hitherto have been proposed as descriptive of the interrelationship of persons. We need to reexamine the complexities of the relations between persons and the language descriptions. In this regard, all three writers have brought the critical tools of their tradition to challenge our use of conventional language so that we may reflect reality more accurately.

Not only is the language issue yet to be explored fully, the ethical dimension of freedom provides a vast world of research still to be conducted. One part of this world concerns how the Spirit enables freedom. Another is the need to explore the issue of responsive obedience. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that while we can now understand freedom as a relationally determined term, I have not answered exhaustively all the questions it raises in the world of relationships. Certainly the term "relational" itself can be understood in a variety of ways. That alone provides a new horizon for further exploration and articulation. Although all three writers described freedom in relational terms, it is obvious from this study that John Macmurray, John Zizioulas and Karl Barth did not mean the same thing by it—and while Macmurray and Zizioulas have much to offer, I propose that in the final analysis it is Karl Barth who offers the most constructive way forward for Christian theology.

This study has focused on these three seemingly similar perspectives in order to challenge our assumptions about their similarity, and to reveal the wide diversity of conclusions that differing presuppositional platforms can produce in our own understandings of personhood, particularly with regard to whether we begin with an anthropocentric/ecclesiocentric viewpoint or a Christocentric one. The former bases, though claiming the phrase "trinitarian theology," begin with faulty presuppositions, and therefore cannot remain consistently trinitarian in focus, whereas a Christocentric base alone provides both internal consistency and a trinitarian perspective on personhood, freedom and their related issues.

Such terms as exocentric, heterocentric, ek-stasis, perichoresis, cirumincessio, coinherence, cyclical movement, reciprocity, interchange, mutual indwelling, externality, interpellating, recursion and the like must be examined and evaluated.
Appendix A

Gender and Freedom in the Theology of Barth

For Barth there is a unique relation between male and female which more precisely accentuates the freedom God intends for humanity. This freedom is established in the being of God and is gifted to and reflected in humanity as male and female.

God exists in a specific relation of love which is shared with humanity as a covenant partner. God’s freedom is not an arbitrary willingness, but is the expression of the shared love of the Trinity intended to facilitate the freedom of the creature created in God’s image to reside in communion with God. This is not neutral freedom, but is the specific encounter by God of another. This other is not generic but is the other created to respond to the free love of God.

God’s freedom is an ordered freedom. The Father loves the Son as other and the Son loves the Father as other. The same is true of the Spirit. God’s very being is one of free, loving orderliness. For Barth there can be no solitude in God, only a being who exists in relationship and fellowship.¹

In the orderliness of God’s free love there is a polarity. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. Thus, the eternal relations are the mutual self-giving of each person of the Trinity to the others, which is then shared with humanity. The form of this extension of love to humanity takes place in the form of a covenant relationship whereby God, in the person of Jesus Christ, establishes a unilateral covenant (one on behalf of many) with the creature made in God’s image. This image is seen in the polarity of otherness portrayed in Adam and Eve. Adam is not Eve and Eve is not Adam, yet together they exist for one another in a relationship of correspondence. Without the maleness of Adam, Eve’s

¹Barth, CD, 3.2, p. 324 Note, “God is in relationship, and so too is the man created by him.”
femaleness has no context and no meaning. Likewise, without Eve's femaleness Adam's maleness is meaningless. God's intention was for his good creation to exist in a godly shape; specifically in the complementariness of male and female, who together reflect the image of God. Thus, God not only loves intrinsically, but also the other (humanity) created to exist in communion with the divine and with one another.

Jesus images for humanity the love of God for that which is other than Godself. In Him, the eternal relations of the Trinity are manifest in a human being. The covenant is made external in creation in personal form. In this person, the Creator becomes creature. God takes on the form of what is other than Godself in order to embrace the other. The free love of God for the other within the Trinity has become the free love of God outside the Trinity for others, not generally but specifically, in the God-human, Jesus Christ.

In Jesus we see otherness replicated. We see Jesus as other, the object of the Father's love and the subject who reciprocates. Jesus stands as the subject who loves the creation; the basis of the analogy of relations whereby humanity understands both God and subsequent creatureliness. Through Christ, humanity is able to answer the address of God in the dialogue of I and Thou, witnessing to the call of God to exist in correspondence with God and with one's fellow humanity as a reflection of God's being. Thus, through Christ, we see that God has created counterparts to exist in correspondence in the exercise of loving freedom. The other is not totally different, as though animals could fulfill the need for loving correspondence. In all of God's orderliness there is a specific other who uniquely fulfills the dynamic love relationship God intends.

God specifically chooses to structure humanity as male and female as a reflection of one being with the other who would be incomplete in isolation. This male/female correspondence is the only structural differentiation in which humans exist. Persons of different sizes, shapes, and races may intermingle freely without structural restraint (though human cultural barriers are destructively evident!). But in the basic duality of male and female (whether married or not) there is otherness in correspondence. One is not made to be the other. One is not made to be alienated from the other. One is not made to be above the other. The one implies the other: "I am male because you are female." The one is free to love the other who is distinct and different, and yet fulfills and

---

2 Barth, CD 3.2, p. 323. Humanity exists as other to God in all God's acts as Creator, Sustainer, Lord, etc. The same is true in the specific relations of Yahweh and Israel (see p. 297), Christ and Church, etc

3 Barth, CD 3.1, p. 290

4 Barth, CD 3.2, p. 286.
completes. As God loves what is not God, so humanity finds fulfillment in loving one who is made in ordered correspondence.

In this relationship of togetherness, each does not dissolve into the other but rather establishes their uniqueness. The Son loves the Father and in so doing does not lose but establishes his personhood. The Son loves all humanity, but again does not lose himself, but becomes their High Priest. So too in the human realm, when we affirm the opposite sex as other than ourselves we grant value and dignity and meaning to our own selves as uniquely distinct in the context of the other sex. Thus, our relationships are reciprocal and we never become identical with another.

Precisely because the Father is not the Son, they exist in a plexiform relationship which gives content and meaning to the personhood of each. So too, for humanity, our togetherness establishes us as companions, helpmates, and fellows for specific others which make us unique persons. While our relation to all humanity may appear adequate to establish our personhood in encounter, God has specifically made us male and female, not merely for biological reasons, but to be with one another as the completion of our humanity: male without female or female without male are not the image of God. Only in the mutuality of relations do we have our invitation to free humanity. Just as a solitary God is not the Christian God, so also the solitary sex is not the image of the Christian human.

We have established that there is a polarity of gender within the one humanity which is made in the image of God. This polarity is the basis of love for the other which is intended to reflect the life of God. Some would presume that any other human would be sufficient to establish our humanity, or merely the presence of God alone. Yet the actual dealings of God with humanity was to create female for male and male for female and for them not to be without the other. While the present philosophy on the American scene is that "variety is the spice of life," the intention of God is faithfulness in correspondence, whether in marriage or not, respecting the dignity and honor of those created for our completion. This does not mean that we do not value those like us, but affirms that we are what we are (male/female) because they are what they are as the fulfillment of God's image. Within this context one could go on to talk about the love of parents of their children as other or love of neighbor, but children and neighbors do not violate the basic structure of humanity as male and female, but are a categorization of relationships within it.

It is also important to note that maleness and femaleness are not mere categories based on human observation. They are not merely biological categories. The

---

5 Barth. CD 3.2, pp. 271-72.
6 Barth, CD 3.4, pp. 116-17.
biological is certainly present, but more fundamental is a relational sense that one exists to love the other with sexuality as an expression within the relation. Hence, to collapse the relation into a biological distinction only is to miss the personal dimension of mutual love. Also, the distinction is not merely a social category with defined roles. In the modern world, the social distinctions are collapsing, for better or for worse, and yet at the same time there is an outcry by both men and women to attempt to gain (or regain) a sense of their unique maleness and femaleness. This is a tragic quest for many who can only shuffle through endless proposals based on one cultural agenda or another, often without regard to their relatedness to the other sex.

For Barth, gender is a spiritual category which bears witness to the triune God. In the fact that we were created to be with this other we have the grounds which give life to our sexuality. In living out our love for the other we reflect the love that Christ has for the church. Between the sexes there is a latent potential to be a covenant partner in faithfulness and creativity and so to reflect the love of God. There is no apology for the difference that exists, we are glad for what they are as a fulfillment of our maleness/femaleness. Radical feminists attempt to isolate their femaleness from the male and to glorify their independence. Homosexuals claim that they can find otherness in one like themselves. Yet both live in violation of the image of God which is the affirmative correspondence of male and female for each other. They have denied the orientation as persons (not only on the biological level) that they were made as correspondent beings. We do not live in chaos, but affirm the place of both sexes (and sexuality itself) in an ordered reciprocity.
Bibliography

Primary Texts

Karl Barth


_______. 2.1, The Doctrine of God, Part 1. Translated by T. H. L. Parker, W. B. Johnston, H. Knight, and J. L. M. Haire from the German original of 1940, ET 1957.


4.1, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part 1*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley from the German original of 1953, ET 1956.


“Real Church.” SJT. Translated from the German original of 1948. 3 (1950): 337–51.


John Macmurray


______. The Boundaries of Science: A Study in the Philosophy of Science. London: Faber and Faber, 1939.


______. Interpreting the Universe. London: Faber and Faber, 1933/1936.

______. Idealism against Religion. London: Lindsay Press, 1944.


______. *The Self as Agent*. (Being the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Glasgow in 1953) London: Faber and Faber. 1957.


**John Zizioulas**


Secondary Literature


272


________. "No Other Foundation. One Englishman's Reading of Church Dogmatics, Chapter V." In *Reckoning With Barth: Essays in Commemoration*


Matheny, Paul D. *Dogmatics and Ethics: The Theological Realism and Ethics of Karl Barth.* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1990.


281


